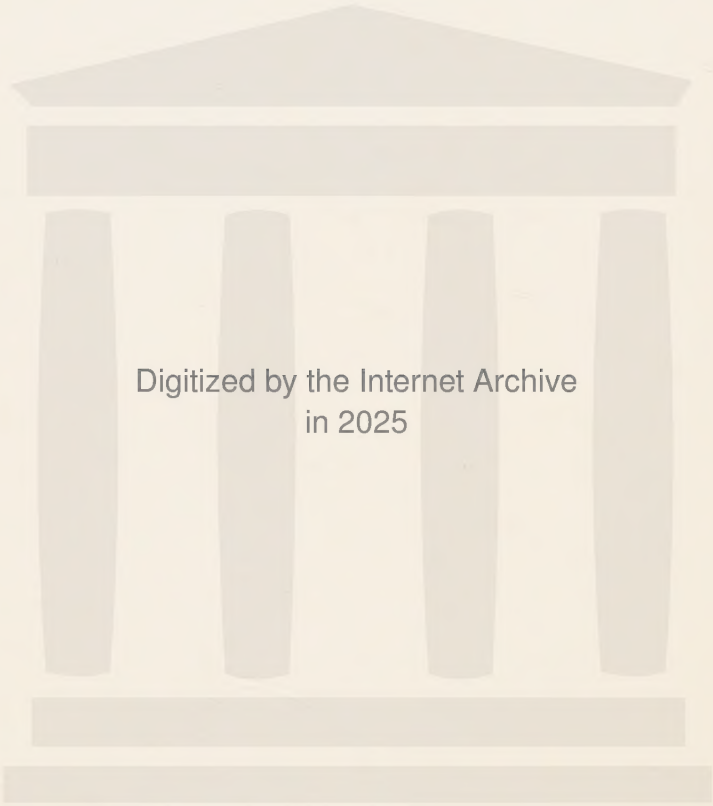
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JEFFERSON DAVIS

Jefferson Davis.

The President of the Confederate States

JEFFERSON DAVIS:

His Rise and Fall

A BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE

BY ALLEN TATE

Be secret and exult,
Because of all things known
That is most difficult.

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TO BEN

CONTENTS

PART I

I. The Man and the Hour 3
II. King Cotton 29
III. Davis and the Lower South 49
IV. The Making of a Nation 83

PART II

V. The Great Year: 1862 119
VI. The Confederacy Abroad 154
VII. Gettysburg: The Military Crisis 177
VIII. The People 207

PART III

IX. The Death Struggle: 1864 233
X. Revolution and Collapse 262
XI. Flight 284
XII. Epilogue 299

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
The President of the Confederate States	*Frontispiece*
The Vice-President of the Confederate States	20
Varina Howell Davis	76
Leaders of the South	94
Confederate Generals	146
Robert E. Lee	194
General Joseph E. Johnston	254
General Braxton Bragg	254
Jefferson Davis	288

PART I

CHAPTER I

THE MAN AND THE HOUR

I

THE morning of January 21st, 1861, was, in Washington, cold but fair, so that by eleven-thirty the carriages rapidly approaching the Capitol along Pennsylvania Avenue were splattered a little less than usual with the village mud of the "city of magnificent distances." On the sidewalks, from Willard's Hotel near the Treasury on down past the National Hotel and thence to the Capitol itself, little knots of people gathered, quickly dispersed, formed into other knots of people. It had been a month and a day since the secession of South Carolina. Excitement was high; the common business of the hour went undone. And in the last twelve days four more states had left the Union. Most of the local population, being Southern, openly rejoiced, for the doddering and neutral President was obviously, out of sheer bewilderment, going to let the seceding states have their way. To the Republicans, who were held at bay until March 4th, Buchanan's indecision was little better than treason; to the Southerners, who had put him in office, it was downright bad faith.

Traitor was now beyond doubt the rôle of Senator Davis from Mississippi: his state had been, on January 9th, the next after South Carolina to go out of the Union, and still he remained in

Washington and, because the news had not been official, kept his seat in the United States Senate. He had, said hostile rumors, led a conspiracy of senators from the Lower South to overturn the government; for such was the Republican gloss upon a document called *To Our Constituents,* drawn up, signed, and forwarded by these senators to their respective states. The paper, about which there was no air of secrecy or conspiracy whatever, announced that the end had come, that the "argument is exhausted," that "all hope of relief in the Union is extinguished," that relief must be found in secession, and then in the organization of a Southern confederacy. It had been sent out early in December as the signal to South Carolina to secede. Mr. Davis, moreover, on the day after Mississippi's declaration of independence, had addressed the Senate on affairs in South Carolina, defending her position and denouncing the vacillation of the President: whereat the Republican Senator Trumbull had risen to agree with the Senator from Mississippi that the President was at fault—but, of course, for a different reason; he had then charged the Senator with the possession of secret information of the intentions of the government towards the forts in Charleston harbor. Davis, he intimated, was staying in Washington as long as possible to spy and to conspire, and to lobby as many other states into treason as he could, and to paralyze the action of Buchanan until the South was united.

Because the Southerners did not conceive the government as the Federal machinery at Washington, but simply as the Constitution, a copy of which might be found almost anywhere, these accusations against Davis acquired a certain plausibility: the naïve belief that loyalty to the Washington government was loyalty was already confusing the attitudes of both sides in the

coming struggle, and the result was the astonishing spectacle of the deeply conservative party accepting the part of revolutionists. The Democrats from the South could not make up their minds about this themselves, and it was this uncertainty that had kept Mr. Davis in Washington as the informal ambassador, not the accredited senator, from his state. He was there, too, for other reasons than this.

For more than a month he had been ill. He was not able to travel; besides, he had no specific duties to perform in Mississippi; he had been called to none; and he might by a miracle bring the fire-eaters of both sides to their senses. It is true that he had, in November, just after Lincoln's election, written to Robert Barnwell Rhett, Jr., that "If the secession of South Carolina should be followed by an attempt to coerce her back into the Union, that act of usurpation, folly, and wickedness, would enlist every true Southern man for her defense"; but he had warned Rhett against hasty action in South Carolina; the mixed population of the western states, "the Northern element in the body politic," might be slow to act; and South Carolina would be left to shift for herself, and to fail alone. He had added, significantly, that it might be wise to make sure of the possibility of concerted action by all parties in the South. Davis was cautious and hesitating and was not, in the phrase of the times, a secessionist *per se*.

The events of the following month therefore become exceedingly remarkable. After all explanation is done they remain mysterious to this day. For Davis, the ablest debater for Southern rights since Calhoun, was for reasons that we shall see emotionally bound to the Union. The specifically Southern nationalism of the Lower South did not exhaust his feeling for the nation;

this feeling encompassed something more; and from now on he, but not he alone of the Southern leaders, has a disturbing and alien memory to look back to; a kind of Sodom, if you will, that he came to hate, but to which he was still drawn, the vision of which was to turn him into a pillar of salt! It was thus, in that time, that arch conservatives, by looking backward, became revolutionists.

Between January 12th and 21st, Davis was still suffering from dyspepsia and neuralgia, and he was confined to his house. Governor Pickens had asked him to come to South Carolina—Pickens had fired on the Federal steamer "Star of the West" on January 9th, but no crisis had resulted, and the status of the Charleston forts remained unchanged—but on the 18th Davis told him that his presence was suddenly needed in Mississippi, that he did not have time to come to Charleston at all. He had been appointed to the Major-Generalcy of the Army of the State of Mississippi, and on the morning of the 21st he went to the Senate for the first time in eleven days, to say farewell.

The news that he would speak had preceded him; the Senate was full, only a few seats, those of already departed Southerners, being empty. Up in the gallery visitors poured into the aisles; beautifully dressed ladies came in on the arms of their squires; coal-scuttle bonnets, tied with wide ribbons under the chin, framed smooth bandeaux of hair. Every bonnet was the round apex of a great obtuse angle widening incredibly along the sides of the indispensable hoops; the tight sleeves and tighter bodices bloomed upside down towards the floor; as each lady sat down her hoop collapsed faithfully about her feet; she waited in ill-concealed tension for the speech to begin. At the gallery doors, members of the House, pages, army officers, clerks hovered;

down below at the back of the chamber more congressmen gathered. By a few minutes before twelve, every space, above and below, was taken. In the gallery, inconspicuous and looking straight ahead, sat Mrs. Jefferson Davis. In a moment her husband would rise.

He rose. A few seconds he hesitated, standing perfectly erect, almost swayback, in the manner of statesmen and other great men of his time. A stranger, unmoved by the scene, might have wondered what kind of man he was. He was not tall, but he looked tall because he was slender; he was faultlessly dressed in black broadcloth, wore a black silk handkerchief tied stock-wise round his neck and a white stiff shirt and black satin waistcoat. His long brown hair fell on each side of a high, square, finely modelled forehead; beneath heavy brows, deep-set gray eyes looked out with a kind of unseeing intensity; a handsome aquiline nose, perfectly set in his face, almost hid a mobile, receding upper lip; under the high cheek-bones lay deep hollows; these and the square jaws and protruding chin gave the whole face a look of extreme emaciation—and of an iron will. A glance at this man would have revealed his possession of absolute self-mastery. Looked at more closely, he might have seemed less harmonized than self-conquered; as if he had suppressed a certain instability of temperament by will alone, and then ignored it. One would have supposed that the man could understand people intellectually, by a comparison of their ideas with his own; but not emotionally. He seemed to lack emotional subtlety; while of every logical and intellectual subtlety he was the master. His gaunt ascetic face and withdrawn eyes betrayed a haughty and impatient pride; he would expect ideas to settle the course of events, and not quite grasp the necessity of cajoling men into

sharing his desires. A great statesman, perhaps the most disinterested statesman in American history, he seemed too remote and uncompromising to be a politician. As he stood at his desk about to speak, he must have struck the detached observer with a certain inflexibility of pose.

This man, whom Seward later called the brains of the "Secession Plot," without whom the "plot" could not have succeeded, had actually made himself ill in the last four or five months trying to avert secession. His warning to the younger Rhett was only an incident in his efforts toward that end. While back in 1850 he had tried to bring the South to break up the old Union, doubts and misgivings had come upon him; he had changed his mind. In 1850, secession might have moved on unopposed; the North was less powerful than in 1860; in that decade the Middle West had filled up with new immigrants; in 1850 the population there was still largely Southern in sympathy and interest. But the Nashville Convention of 1850, dominated by Rhett the elder and by Yancey and Davis, had not been able to get behind it a united South.

The Compromise of 1850 and Douglas's success with popular sovereignty in the Kansas fight seemed to prove the secessionists to have been wrong: Rhett, the John the Baptist of the movement, for whom Davis was later to be the very unsatisfactory messiah, was now discredited: the people in 1850 did not want to secede; the Compromise and popular sovereignty, both apparently successful, told them that they did not need to. Davis had shared the optimism of the South over the popular sovereignty issue; but when it was clear that the South could not hold its own in Kansas, that the "slave empire," so eager to expand, was not sufficiently eager to fill up the territory with Negroes and

obtain a majority, Davis knew that Douglas, out of self-interest, had betrayed the interests of the South. Douglas, the wiliest demagogue of the time, knew that the North would win Kansas, and he the Northern vote; by appearing to give the South an equal chance he expected to win the Southern vote too. Davis at last saw through Douglas's tricks and became his enemy. This enmity was in a few years to become the immediate cause of secession; though Davis, a poor analyst of events, saw this too late.

At Charleston, in 1860, the Democratic Convention would not nominate Douglas, and Douglas was the only candidate the Northern Democrats would vote for. Davis and Yancey defeated him because he had betrayed the South; but they defeated him only to elect Abraham Lincoln. In the summer of 1860, Davis saw his error, and asked Douglas to withdraw his independent candidacy in favor of a candidate that both sections might unite on. Then Douglas shrewdly, and for once honestly, replied that he was the only man the Northern Democrats would vote for. By failing to nominate Douglas, Davis and Yancey had split the Democratic party, the only national power left in the country equal to holding the sections together.

Davis could not lead Mississippi into secession in 1850; by helping to ensure the election of Lincoln he unwittingly forced his state to secede; and now nothing he could do would prevent it. When he had written his letter of caution to Rhett the younger, he had been in Jackson, where he also cautioned the Governor to delay. But the Governor, J. J. Pettus, cast the deciding vote for a secession convention at a meeting of the Mississippi delegation to Congress: Davis had voted against it. Yancey, in Alabama, who had whipped up opinion for secession for

twenty years, now had so little effect on the action of his state that the people did not even send him to their secession convention.

The "Secession Plot" had evidently gone beyond the original plotters, for the conspirators were a whole people. If Davis had been a secessionist in 1850, he had been even then not a secessionist of the Rhett school: he belonged with Calhoun, who was committed to preserving the rights, even the supremacy, of the South within the Federal Union up to the last moment; while the elder Rhett, that profound and cynical statesman, was the Southern Tiresias who saw that all compromise with the North was futile, that the South must come to secession or in the end to gradual domination by the North. . . .

Before Jefferson Davis began to speak he looked round at the vast audience with a kind of sad gravity. Even as he stood the crowd noiselessly increased; ladies sat on the floor in the aisles, or with their bright colors checkered the sofas in the passageway back of the Senate forum; the reporters' gallery held the entire diplomatic corps. His glance withdrew reluctantly from the crowd, as if he dreaded to speak. Then in a voice that faltered over the first words, but gathered in volume as he went on, he began:

I rise, Mr. President, for the purpose of announcing to the Senate that I have satisfactory evidence that the State of Mississippi, by a solemn ordinance of her people in convention assembled, has declared her separation from the United States. Under these circumstances, of course, my functions terminate here. It has seemed to me proper, however, that I should appear in the Senate to announce that fact to my associates, and I will say but very little more. . . . It is known to Senators who have served with me here, that I have for many years

advocated, as an essential attribute of State sovereignty, the right of a State to secede from the Union . . . if I had thought that Mississippi was acting without sufficient provocation . . . I should still, under my theory of Government, because of my allegiance to the State of which I am a citizen, have been bound by her action. . . . Nullification and secession, so often confounded, are indeed antagonistic principles. Nullification is a remedy which it is sought to apply within the Union, and against the agent of the States. . . . Secession belongs to a different class of remedies. It is to be justified upon the basis that the States are sovereign. There was a time when none denied it. I hope the time may come again, when a better comprehension of the theory of our Government . . . will prevent any one from denying that each State is sovereign. . . . Then, Senators, we recur to the compact which binds us together . . . we but tread in the path of our fathers when we proclaim our independence, and take the hazard . . . we will invoke the God of our fathers, who delivered us from the power of the lion, to protect us from the ravages of the bear; and thus, putting our trust in God, and in our own firm hearts and strong arms, we will vindicate the right as best we may. . . . I see now around me some with whom I have served long; there have been points of collision; but whatever of offense there has been to me, I leave here; I carry with me no hostile remembrance. . . . I go hence unencumbered of the remembrance of any injury received, and having discharged the duty of making the only reparation in my power for any injury offered. . . . Mr. President, and Senators, having made the announcement which the occasion seemed to me to require, it remains only for me to bid you a final adieu.

Mr. Davis sat down, but the audience, as if it expected more or was not satisfied with the formal simplicity of his words, waited an instant before it burst into deafening applause. His head in his hands, he shrank from the ovation; there were whispers in remote corners that he was weeping.

The farewell was one of the most characteristic speeches Davis ever delivered: it betrayed the curious separation of his intellect and his feelings. Beneath the beautifully coherent defense of the secessionists ran a note of regret for what he was about to leave behind; it was something more than the loss of the habits of fifteen years, though these, for a rigid character, must be hard to break; it came down, in the end, to an emotional timidity, a fear of changing the objects of one's attachment, a kind of inertia that no amount of intellectual conviction could quite remove. He was emotionally undeveloped; and for this reason he could not altogether get at the motives of men. A close, detached listener to his speech would have been amazed at his allusion to the "theory of our Government" and the implication that a better understanding of theory would set the "irrepressible conflict" at rest.

The theory of State Rights and the belief in secession had been understood in both sections equally, when advantage dictated understanding: as late as 1846 the state government of Massachusetts had been willing to secede, had passed resolutions to that end, in opposition to the Mexican War. The North alone now repudiated state sovereignty because it had no interest to serve with its support. But Davis never quite understood that conflicts are not decided by citations of the law, or by the results of discussion: the intellectual habits of the secluded, theoretical student had not been altered by his years in politics; they had been transformed into the habits of the parliamentary committeeman. Not even the events of December had taught him the implacable motives of the North. After the Republican senators had rejected the Crittenden Compromise, which gave to them every eventual advantage and to the South nothing in the end,

they would not listen to a proposal of a convention of the states; they were then challenged for a compromise proposal of their own, but not a Republican replied. At this distance it is certain that the deadlock exactly suited the North, for its purpose was to subdue the South at all costs; in a policy that conceded nothing and demanded everything, the North meant to "ride over the South rough-shod." The South at this time was willing to accept any measure that guaranteed it even less than its Constitutional rights in the territories; but the North no longer desired equality of sectional power; the North was bent upon domination. By refusing to budge from this position, the North forced the South to act for its preservation, and by means of the slavery issue the shrewdness of the Yankee succeeded, as always, in putting his enemy in the wrong. There was probably not a single phase of this conflict that Mr. Davis failed, in a sense, to understand; and yet, in the end, he could not see why men would not follow the law, or why the inflamed sections would not abide by compromises. Men sometimes act reasonably, but almost never logically; this was a distinction that Mr. Davis, being logical, could not grasp.

If it is true that Davis, the secessionist, wept at the end of his farewell to the Senate, it is remarkable that his opponents, who denied the right to secede, shed not a tear. For there were only two parties in America that knew their own minds, and the mind of each other. The Republicans were determined to hold and dominate the South, and they had no reservations that unsettled their purpose. The extreme secessionists understood this purpose, and were equally determined to get away before it was too late. Lincoln meant to hold the South, but not to dominate it, and thus his idea of the Union was unique and grand; it

was mystical and almost religious, and it later became the rationalization of the motives of the North in a war of conquest. Lincoln is one of the few characters in history whose real greatness it was found convenient to use: his sublime character and the motives of the North became identified: Lincoln and the war became the same thing; but they were very different. The sole idea of Lincoln's to be realized was the geographical Union, and he is actually the most defeated great man in American history. The most completely vindicated is the little known Robert Barnwell Rhett, the prophet of secession, who, from the dingy office of the Charleston *Mercury,* had thundered against half-measures in the South for more than twenty years: the South was destroyed, and the American nation became what he said it would become. He saw the weakness of the Southern faith in mere political action—its futility against the extra-legal procedure of the North, whose most clamorous and radical leaders were driven by irrational, fixed ideas that recognized no Constitutional authority whatever. The slow, temporizing Southern intelligence could not cope with such a force, for which the body politic was no longer a reality. The North was, at that time, the most advanced modern state, in which government, and men as political entities, were instrumental to the superior ends of commerce and trade. It was the ironic distinction of the elder Rhett merely to have *seen.*

For, as Jefferson Davis, with lowered head, painfully moved through the crowded Senate chamber out into the street, the old Constitutional republic came—although Davis could not see it—to a dramatic end. There would no longer be a Union in the exact sense of that word; there would be a uniformity; for one of the two types of American civilization must absolutely prevail. Davis

left the Senate chamber smaller; it would never be so large again; he was the last of the Senate giants.

He was a giant ridden by dyspepsia and neurasthenia, morbidly sensitive and emotionally undisciplined; his emotional instability bulwarked behind a boundless intellectual pride. He lacked emotional resilience and he could not read the meaning of events; he could cap the hour with a formula; he could analyze the theoretical significance of the passing moment, for he had done this for ten years in the Senate with a logical acumen that held spellbound even his enemies. He could shatter the arguments of his shrewdest opponents, but he could not fathom the opponent's political cunning or forestall its success. He always won over Douglas in debate; Douglas won the political crisis in the end. He could not feel his way into the future, nor foretell the results of his own decisions. He was therefore constantly surprised—and constantly disappointed. Like Woodrow Wilson at Versailles, he could not see why a beautifully arranged program should not succeed. Davis's powerful will could not make up for the lack of emotional conviction, and he was doomed to the obstinate support of half-measures and, in his lack of vision, to the mere hope that it would all work out well in the end. . . .

All the night of January 21st he suffered, sleepless; the nervous strain of the last six months had broken him down. His neuralgia had spread a film over one iris; he was almost blind in that eye. Mrs. Davis, anxious in the next room, heard him say, again and again, in a tone of agony: "May God have us in his holy keeping, and grant that before it is too late peaceful councils may prevail."

The very Constitutional Convention of the Confederacy was

to be a "peaceful council." It repudiated all but adherents to the old Union, thinking it would prevail!

2

In 1861, the capital of Alabama was a large small town radiating from one street, a mile long, that ran from the beautiful Alabama River gently upwards to the capitol, white-columned and classical in the early spring sun. For years the cotton trade, in Montgomery, had been falling off, and now the main business was government; neither streets nor houses had about them that look of bright impermanence which is the sign of hurry and trade. The town, as the history of capital cities goes, was not old; its oldest citizen probably antedated it; but it looked fixed and old. The houses stood back from the streets surrounded by heavily scented gardens, almost hidden by the semitropical sweet gum and the magnolia; here and there, although it was a little far to the north, grew a camphor tree. Over the small porticos of the older houses the sweet-scented honeysuckle ran uncut, wild; and the wide double galleries of the later dwellings, built in the recent spacious times, gleamed white through the great catalpa trees now coming into leaf. Voices, disembodied in the still air, floated into the street, as if the houses themselves had spoken. The town seemed to have aged quickly, but after reaching a certain maturity to have ceased growing old. It bore an air of solid dilapidation, that would never quite topple into decay, an air of changeless repose.

At the moment, however, there seemed to be a quickened and unusual pulse in the life of the town. There was a great deal of coming and going, of stopping to talk a few minutes at front

gates; of hurriedly passing on. From the river to the capitol strangers filled the streets. Country people, in ox-carts or in muddy wagons pulled by mules, bumped over the cobbles of the main street: nearly all Southerners were countrymen at that time; these were the plain people. Mingled with the carts moved the more genteel family carriages of the ruling class.

Near the capitol the crowd was gathering fast. The two small hotels, not far from the capitol, were overflowing; men and women stood about as if they expected to go to an important meeting, or perhaps to a country fair. The streets were full of Negroes who seemed to have nothing to do but laugh and jostle one another; their ragged clothing contrasted sharply with the finery of the whites. Near the capitol square a man wearing a black tail-coat and beaver hat smoked a long black cigar; at intervals, in the unpleasantly histrionic tone of the professional auctioneer, he cried out: "Niggers is cheap, niggers is cheap." A small crowd had collected to hear him; but the mass steadily moved towards the front of the capitol. It was, evidently, not a fair, but a political meeting. It was early in the Alabama spring. The day was the 4th of February, 1861. . . .

The galleries of the Senate hall of the Alabama Legislature were packed, and the private gentleman lucky enough to be there could hear the boisterous curiosity of the mob outside. Below him, grave and deliberate, as if they had been there forever, sat the thirty-eight delegates to the Constitutional Convention of the Confederate States of America. This anonymous gentleman looked down on altogether the most remarkable, the most puzzling group of men ever assembled in the States.

As a collection of portraits their like will not be seen again in American history; for, had they but known it, they were there

to enact their own extinction, to write the obituary to their race. This distinct Southern type, developed in the Lower South, had produced a unique philosophy of action that bears no name. Outside political forms it was inarticulate; for nearly forty years it had been put on the defensive by the anti-slavery agitation; it could not afford the leisure and detachment that the development of a highly conscious, deeply realized literature requires. Doctor Dew, of William and Mary College, who had been trained abroad, overstepped the conservative Virginian opinion of his time, which tended towards emancipation of the Negroes, and wrote a philosophical defense of the slavery system. Chancellor Harper, of the South Carolina Supreme Court, took the same view. But neither Dew nor Harper, the most philosophical of the Southern writers, had been very original; their doctrine had been only a revival of Aristotle, with something of Plato thrown in —a compendium of quoted authority, rather than a fresh vision of their own society.

The makers of the Confederate government were political and not philosophical minds. Not one of them was individually so original as the society that had brought him there; the new impulse of that society was to be frustrated because their leaders could think only in politics—the politics of the United States Constitution. Because that document had been their best defense within the old Union, they imagined it to be the government best suited to a new social order; and they were wrong. Their political genius only hastened their downfall; it was not a time for politics; it was the hour for a man of great conviction who could act without precedent and fear, who saw through the outworn political machinery into the real motives of the Lower South. New and expansive, unbound by strong local tradition, the Lower South

was gradually pushing towards an empire, agricultural, slave-owning, aristocratic.

The faces of the men now in the Alabama senate evinced a subtle shade of difference from those one might have found in a similar group in the North; they were nearer to a type. In nearly all their faces there was an expression of simple repose combined with a kind of astuteness, unlike the introverted, contemplative intelligence visible in the faces of the great New Englanders of the same time. There was another arresting quality in their features; here was a band of "traitors" and "revolutionists," and yet every one of them looked upon the world with an austere benevolence; in the long, bony features of the "slave-power" played a high-bred disinterestedness, even a kind of simple nobility. Above the rest, Howell Cobb, the presiding officer, late Secretary of the United States Treasury, surveyed the Convention with an air of utter casualness; as if new nations were formed every day and it were nothing to get excited about. Cobb's drooping eyes, a little puffy, his long hair and full beard, joined in an expression mixed of quizzical cunning and innocence. He was master of a town of Negroes, more than a thousand; one of the largest slaveholders in the South; "the sum of all evil." If a barely imaginable abolitionist could have witnessed the scene, he might have felt a slight contradiction between the "sum of all evil" and the character of the men who represented it; nor could he have argued with much conviction, as Charles Francis Adams did when he took his son Henry to Mt. Vernon, that here was the exception; there were too many men not to make the rule.

One man had come only to write the new Constitution, and he succeeded in doing it. It took him five days. But it was less the genius of the Honorable Alexander H. Stephens than his

determination, and still less the genius of the assembly at large, which brought into existence a new nation in so short a time. Possibly the Southern aptitude for parliamentary tactics had something to do with it. The real explanation is the political inertia that pervaded the Convention, the poverty of ideas, the deep-seated reluctance of the delegates to part with the old Union. Torn between Sodom and salvation, the delegates prepared only for compromise with the Washington government: to be rid of Washington and yet to keep it. There was no determined leadership in the opposite direction; no leader rose who saw the inevitable war; and the Confederacy was hobbled from the start with an intricate system built on the assumption of peace. Mr. Stephens was the only man of conviction who had influence: he had this because he had fought secession in Georgia to the last hour. He was a confirmed Unionist won to the Confederacy only by technical allegiance to his state. Being a Constitutional pedant, he had to have a precedent for every step: the United States Constitution was the only precedent he knew, and he worshipped it with religious ferocity. The reaction from the immediate excitement of secession had put the fate of the South into the hands of a legal martinet; he neither understood the implacable attitude of the North nor, if he had foreseen war, had he the vaguest plans how to carry it out. He was soon to undermine the government he had created because, he said, the government was undermining constitutional liberty—when it was merely trying to conduct the war. He was a fanatic and he was one of the finest gentlemen, one of the noblest men, who ever lived.

He was the most remarkable looking figure of his age. Little more than five feet tall, he weighed about ninety pounds and had the body of a fourteen year old boy. At a glance he hardly

The Vice President of the Confederate States

looked older than that. But the almost beardless face was seamed with fine wrinkles, and the small slits of eyes, dull and lightless, were the eyes of a nonagenarian. He was a lifelong dyspeptic and he looked too frail to outlive the moment, but the stunted frame was driven relentlessly by a powerful will and by an acute, one-tracked intellect. He was steeped in the classical orators, in the Bible, and in American constitutional law; he knew nothing else. The son of a poor farmer school-teacher of the Georgia "up country," he was educated by local subscription for the ministry, which he repudiated for the law; he repaid his benefactors; he became the best jury lawyer in his state and, with Toombs and Cobb, its leading politician. He rose at a time when it was still possible for a man to lift himself politically by his own bootstraps. He owed nothing to intrigue or power; like the other great Southern statesmen, he took to high office an unshakable integrity; he was a true leader of the people.

He was not unlike Davis: the constitution that Mr. Stephens gave to a hesitating Confederacy exhibited no lack of formal ingenuity, but it was mainly a critical revision of the old Constitution from the Southern viewpoint; it was theoretical and, in view of the desperate crisis, unimaginative. It assumed that the Southern government would be let alone, permitted to conduct a high-minded debating society. It reverted to the Articles of Confederation for an explicit statement of the sovereignty of the states, but it declared, nevertheless, that the Confederacy was permanent. It prohibited all duties for the protection of industry. The President's term was to be six years; he could not succeed himself; cabinet officers could speak on the floor of Congress. The slave trade was abolished forever. The Confederate constitution was, no doubt, in many respects superior, looked at from eternity,

to the Constitution of the United States: a New York newspaper admired it extravagantly, urging it as the basis of sectional reconciliation. With unconscious irony it divined the purposes of the Montgomery Convention.

The new government was provisional; the constitution had to be ratified; the permanent order would not come in for a year. It might then be too late to take the drastic measures that the situation required. They could not believe that they had to win their independence, and there were no extraordinary provisions to that end. To conciliate the lukewarmists, they had been put in power, and a strong policy sacrificed to the appearance of harmony all round. Toombs and Cobb had won the secession of Georgia against Stephens and Benjamin Hill: Toombs was cast aside, and Cobb given the safe honor of the presiding chair. Rhett, in the midst of a crisis that he more than any other man had helped to make, was suspect and powerless. The fate of secession was in the hands of those who did not want it.

It was now February 9th. The constitution of the Southern Utopia having been made, Howell Cobb, casually, almost indifferently, rapped for order.

He said: "The next business of the Convention is the election of a provisional President of the Confederate States."

Each state had one vote, and there were six votes in all: South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Louisiana. Tellers were appointed by the Chair to collect and count the votes. They were J. L. M. Curry of Alabama and William Porcher Miles of South Carolina. The result was foregone; but when the teller had gathered the six slips of paper and read them, they approached the Chair and whispered the name to Mr. Cobb.

He rose, and with great deliberation said: "It is my duty to

announce that the Honorable Jefferson Davis of Mississippi has been unanimously elected provisional President of the Confederate States of North America." Mr. Stephens was elected Vice-President.

The gallery burst into applause; then the delegates. It lasted only a half-minute. The gavel of the President of the Convention descended, and the business of the day went on.

3

The mystery of the election of Jefferson Davis, who was not even on the scene and who had done nothing whatever in his own behalf, is still unsolved. There are three possible explanations of it. He was, in the first place, as we have seen, a reluctant secessionist, and his leadership would presumably reconcile the timid and the weak. And then, too, he had been the most powerful debater in the United States Senate, the successor to John C. Calhoun in the defense of Southern rights. Last of all —and this reason forms the sole claim to the sense of reality that the Convention had—Davis was a trained soldier, and his knowledge of war might conceivably be useful, if not now then at some not far distant time. He was a graduate of West Point; he had fought in the Black Hawk War; he had commanded the First Mississippi Volunteers in the Mexican War—with such sensational gallantry that he was still popularly esteemed a great soldier; he had been Secretary of War under Pierce; and he was now by appointment of Governor Pettus, Major-General of the Mississippi troops. He seemed to combine the qualities of statesmanship and war better than anybody else. And yet he was a "dark horse," chosen because the Convention had not the courage

to put forth a convinced leader of the movement that they were supposed to stand for. Before the election Robert Barnwell had admitted to Rhett that Davis was a poor politician and not a great man, but pleaded that the high tone of his character would lend prestige to the cause.

It may have been that Rhett thought that this was all Davis could give to the South, for he soon hated him for a Union man, and he was disgusted with the rumor that Davis had wept saying farewell to the Senate. Not that Rhett questioned Davis's belief in the right of what the South had done; he saw the need of a leader who understood that the bridges had been burnt—what none of the Southern "moderates" understood. Davis in a sense understood it, for he knew there would be war; but regret, or lack of emotional assent to his course, or a prevision of its failure was soon to check his initiative. Instead of the fierce leader cunningly winning over the dissenters and pursuing a straight course, he was the warrior mounting his steed only to ride off in all directions at once.

There were men with greater claims to the Presidency. Rhett's claim was probably the greatest of all, but his position was difficult. He had never quite emerged from the cloud that the failure of the 1850 secession movement had put him under; the now apparently accomplished fact of secession left him, astonishing as it seems, more discredited than ever; he was considered dangerous. There was a certain coldness, a malign and contemptuous quality in his character, mysterious and inscrutable, that repelled men of less depth and of weaker purpose; he was one of the few Southern statesmen who had the courage to face the Southern fact—which was that the South, since 1830, had steadily drawn away from democracy to class rule. He was of the

few who would have plunged into the future and left Mr. Stephens, with his wordy precedents, behind: he was a tough, uncompromising intelligence. He was no demagogue; and he was a little too impatient for political strategy. He was too proud to push his own claims, and the Convention was happy to ignore him. Could South Carolina decently ask for the Presidency? She had led secession and the demand would be ambition run wild. Besides, Rhett stood for permanent separation from the North, had always stood for it; he would have a bad effect on the action of the Upper South, led by Virginia, which did not care to secede at all. Virginia must be won at all hazards, and to be won she must be made to feel that seceding was somehow not secession.

It was two months before Virginia would secede, and yet she was already dictating to the secession convention. She would have none of Rhett, and none of William Lowndes Yancey of Alabama, the most powerful popular agitator in the South. Yancey, no less than Rhett, deserved the now somewhat quaint honor of bringing the South to what a Southern Unionist called a pretty kettle of fish. Ceaselessly and relentlessly he had exerted all the arts of oratory (and he was a master of them, equalled only by Prentiss) for separation. Like Rhett he had been in disfavor since 1850. Yancey and Rhett being removed, the field seemed to shrink to the Georgians—Toombs and Cobb, or even Stephens.

Georgia as a state had, of course, the best claim because she had almost failed to secede: after tremendous efforts by lobbyists from South Carolina and Alabama she was persuaded on January 19th to take the plunge—leaving eighty-nine die-hard Unionists, who never died, against two hundred and eight in favor of secession, of whom forty-one had little heart in it, but who had come over like Stephens with the tide. Robert Toombs had left

Washington before Davis, hurrying to Milledgeville to make the row of states from Louisiana to South Carolina solid. That he succeeded so quickly does scant justice to the power of the Unionists, for the Georgia Unionists were still so formidable that the Convention wished to give to that State the Presidency. Whom could they give? The Georgia delegates themselves could not decide. Toombs was dangerous—he had led them to secede; and he seemed to expect the office. But he was the best all-round man for it. He was able and popular—while Davis was largely unknown to the public. He was an expert economist and he knew something of foreign policy. But he was not a polished debater. He was convivial—anathema to the "most conservative body of men" that Mr. Stephens had ever seen. Altogether he would not do. Mainly, in the end, because he was opposed, like Rhett, to compromise. Louisiana joined with Georgia to support Cobb, but there were no other states behind him and he had no chance. Stephens had little support outside his state.

There were already three states for Davis—Alabama, Mississippi, Florida—and if he got a fourth he would be elected. He got it. And that State was South Carolina! The night before the election Robert Barnwell, kinsman to the formidable Rhett, came to that man to plead the case of Davis. Rhett was made to feel that he alone stood in Davis's way. He now had no hope for himself, but he suspected the character of Davis. Barnwell admitted that Davis was not great. This seems to have been the general opinion of the delegates. T. R. R. Cobb, of Georgia, said: "He is not *great* in any sense of the term. The power of *will* has made him what he is." Rhett gave in, but he was never to be reconciled. Shelved and discredited, it was to be his part to

comment, like a tragic chorus, on the misfortunes of the Davis government.

Toombs, Yancey, and Rhett, the three fire-eaters, typical of the powerful Lower Southern aristocracy, were repudiated for men who were much less representative of their society. Davis, Stephens, Herschel Johnson, Benjamin Hill, probably any of these men stood closer to the average opinion of his time than the three prophets of Southern imperialism; but they were not representative in the best sense because they failed to lead opinion in the crisis; they only registered it. It is possible, had Toombs or Rhett or Yancey been elected to the Presidency, that the South would have won the war in less than a year—or lost it. They were aggressive, charged with the sense of a desperate crisis. But Rhett had no popular following. Toombs had; but he had a bad temper and easily lost his self-control. Yancey was not a statesman; he was an orator. The election of Davis involved the least risk.

However, he was elected less for his experience in politics and war than for the simple fact that there was nothing against him. He was a born compromiser—of ideas; what the Convention did not know was that he was incapable of compromise with men. He was too proud, too sensitive to reproof; he rose, in crises, to great heights of disinterested feeling and responsibility; but, being a chronic neurotic, the price he paid was a continuous headache. As if one dyspeptic were not enough, Alexander H. Stephens was added for full measure!

Montgomery meanwhile more and more resembled a fair. Every day brought new people, and, in further imitation of the old government, a horde of office-seekers arrived on the scene, to be ready for the President when he came. Politicians, large and small, cluttered the sidewalks; their ladies had already set up

minor courts, but the social supremacy remained undecided until Mrs. Davis should get there. Flags and bunting covered public buildings; flags hung from the window of houses; there was a great variety of flags, mostly from the different states, but here and there young ladies carried designs that they were hopeful would be adopted for the nation. The Charleston *Mercury* announced on the 16th that the Provisional Congress—for such the Convention had become—was considering model flags. In spite of the general belief that there would be no war, military companies were constantly appearing in the streets. They were armed with old muskets; some were not armed at all; there was no uniform—some wore blue, some gray.

It had been precisely a week since Mr. Cobb had announced the election of Jefferson Davis: it was now Saturday, February 16th, 1861. The crowds seemed to-day thicker than ever, and the excitement greater; for Mr. Davis would be there at almost any moment.

That night he came from the railroad station into the long avenue lit by bonfires driven in a handsome carriage, cheered by the crowd. The procession—in a moment it became that—moved slowly to the old Exchange Hotel, near the capitol where the great men of the South waited in the glare of torches to receive him. Mr. Davis stood on the gallery of the hotel at the side of William Lowndes Yancey; Mr. Yancey, small, undistinguished-looking, in ill-fitting clothes—Mr. Davis, erect, graceful, immaculate, austere. Mr. Yancey raised his head to the crowd; silence fell. Then, with indescribable grace, the small man moved one hand towards Mr. Davis, and said in ringing yet perfectly modulated tones:

"The man and the hour have met."

CHAPTER II

KING COTTON

I

IN the fall of 1792 Mrs. Catherine Littleton Greene was returning, after a visit to relatives in the North, to her plantation, "Mulberry Grove," in southern Georgia. Mrs. Greene was a sprightly widow—her liveliness, in fact, had made her the subject of gossip in Rhode Island, but in Georgia she was esteemed as a substantial member of the community and a popular hostess. Her plantation, "Mulberry Grove," had been given to her late husband, General Nathanael Greene, by the Commonwealth of Georgia as a recognition of his valiant campaign against the British, and on its broad acres she dispensed the hospitality of the times and the region.

Mrs. Greene seems to have been as kind-hearted as she was high-spirited. Among the passengers on the packet-boat was a young man named Eli Whitney on his way to Savannah to take a position in a wealthy planter's family. When the young man arrived at Savannah he was somewhat disconcerted to find that the position had already been filled. Mrs. Greene's children were already supplied with a tutor, but she invited the young man to be her guest at "Mulberry Grove" until he should find some congenial employment: a stray guest was no novelty at "Mulberry Grove." Soon after Whitney landed, a party of men

from up the river stopped and broke their journey as a matter of course at this hospitable house. The young would-be tutor, who had been a mechanic before he entered Yale College, heard a great deal about the problems of the community in which he hoped to settle. Lounging in deep-bottomed armchairs before the wide fireplace the men talked, over their hot toddies, their eggnogs or a glass of old Madeira, about last year's crop, the prospect for next year's crop and the price they might hope to get for it. "The crop" Whitney knew was always cotton. He soon learned that there were many varieties of it. One, the sea-island variety, had a silky lint which often reached a length of two inches and adhered so loosely to the seed that it could be cleared by hand. The other, the upland variety, as it was called, had lint which clung tightly to its seed and hardly ever exceeded an inch in length. One of the greatest needs of the country, he learned from these men, was a machine, or gin, to separate the short lint of this upland cotton from its seed.

Whitney, urged on by Miller, the tutor of the Greene children, found employment for his long leisure hours in constructing a gin. It was a simple device. A wooden cylinder bristling with wires revolved against the slatted side of a box of cotton, tearing the lint from the seed and leaving the seeds which were too large to squeeze between the slats inside the box. Mrs. Greene contributed to the invention by cleaning the wires with a broom when they became clogged, thus suggesting the use of a second set of cylinders equipped with brushes to keep the wires free from the accumulation of lint. This modest invention was far-reaching in its results. Without it the enormous fortunes which made up the Cotton Kingdom could never have come into existence; without the Cotton Kingdom the Upper South—Virginia,

Kentucky—would have been absorbed by the North, and there would have been no Civil War.

2

"The Cotton Kingdom," as it was called even before 1850, covered as much as four hundred thousand square miles if we include all the land on which cotton could be grown at a profit. It was, in the main, a fertile, alluvial soil, washed by a network of navigable rivers which furnished transportation from even the smallest towns to New Orleans, Charleston and other cotton markets. Not all the land, notably the pine barrens of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Louisiana, was suitable for raising cotton, but even these sections, with the exception of the remote mountain fastnesses, contributed, as we shall see, to the rising power and prestige of the planter. The soil, on the whole, was marvelously productive. It was too loose and open for the culture of wheat, but corn could be raised as easily as cotton. The greatest asset of the country, however, was its climate. The settler, making his way down the river on the "spring rise" knew that he was in no danger of starvation. Having settled in some well-watered valley he could raise two, sometimes even three, crops of peas, potatoes, beans and corn before the winter set in.

The land was easily acquired, too. West of South Carolina it was sold at government sales at a dollar an acre. Some settlers, however, simply "squatted" on their land without going through the formality of a purchase.

Small wonder that a Georgian wrote in 1796:

If Congress do not take some steps they [the people swarming over the Indian border] must and will rush like a torrent over the Oconee

in search of subsistence. How much more politic would it be in the United States to appropriate a hundred thousand dollars to procure the land, than to drive a frontier to desperation which must end in bloodshed.

This gentleman's gloomy prophecy was never fulfilled. The only people who were driven to desperation were the Indians whom the rising tide of migration—and Andrew Jackson—finally forced to abandon their lands. The settlers dwelt together in as much amity as obtained anywhere else on the continent and were gradually welded together into a homogeneous, strongly Southern nationalistic people. Cotton was the king to whom they gave their allegiance, and all classes, from the planter in his mansion to the squatter on his few acres of newly cleared land, were united in his service.

The migration to the Lower South differed from the earlier migrations into Kentucky, Illinois and the other prairie lands. The majority of the people were not driven from their former homes by lack of land or hard times; they were impelled by their desire to get on in the world. Many people from New Jersey, Rhode Island, and some of the New England states settled in the Lower South because they saw an opportunity of getting rich quickly. Certain other factors determined for many the goal of their migration. In Virginia, for instance, the greatest wealth was in slaves, but there was no growing demand for tobacco—always the money crop of that section—and there was no employment for hundreds of slaves. The owners of these slaves must either sell their slaves or move. Kentucky was no longer the promised land. Slaves could not be held in the fertile plains of Indiana and Illinois. To these gentlemen the Lower South offered the most desirable haven, for the slaves which had

been an embarrassment in the East could become the foundation of future wealth. They bought broad acres at ridiculously low prices, erected many-columned white mansions on some river bluff or headland, and kept a state which in Virginia was no longer possible except for the very rich.

A large percentage of the planter class was made up also of people from Kentucky, Maryland and Virginia, ambitious for social advancement. Social strata in the older sections were already well-established. A man, unless possessed of great personal distinction—and this in Virginia often meant merely education—was likely to remain all his life in the class in which he had been born. In the Lower South everybody was "on the make." The profits from one year's crop were often enough to set a man up as a planter, and to set him up in style. The term "cotton snobs" came into vogue.

The Lower South, which has been sentimentalized over more than any other section of the country as the last stronghold of chivalry and the abode of true romance, is thus seen to have been largely a society of *nouveaux riches*. But like *nouveaux riches* everywhere they speedily took on the customs and manners of the local *haute noblesse*. The master of a plantation numbering as many as a thousand acres lived in state and dispensed hospitality on the grand scale. In summer he went to Pass Christian on the Gulf coast or perhaps to Virginia for protracted visits to relatives. Most of the winters he spent in New Orleans, which at this time offered the most brilliant social season on the continent. Always in touch with Paris, it was the first American city to present opera: Charleston, Mobile and Memphis were not far behind in their appreciative interest in the arts. It is worthy of note that the plays of Shakespeare were produced in

Charleston long before they were offered in Boston and Philadelphia. But Southerners have ever had a great admiration for the "immortal bard." A well-bound volume of his plays, along with the almost innumerable volumes of Sir Walter Scott, the novels of George Eliot (always referred to as "he" at this period), the works of Doctor Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith, Virgil, Homer and Horace was found on the library shelves of every plantation home of any consequence. Sir Walter Scott, of course, was the favorite novelist. Southerners saw themselves reflected in his beautiful heroines and knightly heroes.

There was about many grandiose Southern establishments at this time a certain laxity and absence of order which evoked horror in the minds of Northern visitors. A traveler in the South in the '30's has described a plantation mansion as follows:

A huge, colonnaded structure . . . struck our eyes with an imposing effect. It was the abode of one of the wealthiest planters of this State. . . . The grounds about this edifice were neglected, horses were grazing around the piazzas, over which were strewed saddles, whips, horse blankets and the motley paraphernalia with which planters love to lumber their galleries. On nearly every piazza in Mississippi may be found a wash stand, bowl, pitcher, towel and water-bucket for general accommodation. . . . Here they wash, lounge, often sleep, and take their meals.

Another homestead is described thus:

The planter was sitting upon the gallery, divested of coat, vest and shoes, with his feet on the railing, playing in high glee with a little dark-eyed boy and two young Negroes who were chasing each other under the bridge formed by his extended limbs. Three or four noble dogs . . . were crouching like leopards around his chair. . . . A ham-

mock . . . contained a youth of fourteen . . . whose *aide-de-camp* in the shape of a strapping Negress stood by the hammock, waving over the sleeper a long plume of the gorgeous feathers of the pea-fowl.

Only a small minority of the population of the Lower South lived the easy life of the planter. The small farmer dwelt usually in a log house which rarely numbered more than two rooms. Sometimes it was what is known as a double cabin, with a passage open at both ends dividing the two rooms. In such a house Jefferson Davis was born. If the farmer prospered he made a hall of the passage and added porches front and rear or even raised a second story. Most of the household activities went on in the large bedroom in which the farmer and his wife and youngest children slept. The cooking was done before the huge open fireplace. The family dinner, consisting of bacon, corn bread, mush and molasses, was spread on a checkered tablecloth, sometimes on the bare boards of the pine table which stood in the center of the room. The farmer's wife washed her clothes out of doors, heating the water in an enormous pot over a fire made of chips or the smaller sticks of wood from the woodpile. If the farmer owned a Negro family, as was frequently the case, the mistress "minded" the young pickaninnies along with her own children, in order that their mother might be released for service in the field. A small farmer, like Samuel Davis, worked as a rule side by side with his slaves. One such farmer boasted that he hoed row for row with his Negroes. Critics of the slave economy have pointed out that this system may have retarded his advancement considerably. It was generally conceded that a Negro could not or would not work as fast as a white man. The produce from these small farms was carried by wagon to

the nearest plantation town where it was exchanged for the few articles that it was necessary in those days to buy: coffee, sugar, molasses, or a bit of finery for the women folk.

Over in the "piney woods" lived still another class of people, "squatters" most of them, whose right to their barren waste lands was not likely to be disputed by acquisitive planter or Federal agent. Their dwellings were rarely as comfortable or sanitary as those of the plantation slaves. They consisted usually of one room cabins in which whole families slept on filthy beds of straw. The cabins were seldom provided with floors; trash or straw scattered on the earth was the only carpet they were ever likely to know. A few gaunt razor-backs ranging the woods furnished salt pork in winter; a straggling patch of corn, the meal that was indispensable in the house of rich and poor. For the most part these people lived on fish and game. The insufficiency of their diet led, doubtless, to the common practice of "clay eating."

The "hill billies" or "crackers" of northern Georgia and parts of Alabama were a little better off. They sometimes owned a few slaves, raised wheat and corn and produced each year a few bales of cotton. Among these people the mountaineers alone were hostile to slavery, for many of the others were poor relations of the rich merely waiting until they had accumulated enough money to buy a tract of land and a few slaves to set themselves up as planters. Their relations with their wealthier neighbors were friendly. The planters were not far enough removed from poverty themselves to be undemocratic in their manners; and besides, these people had the vote. The planters were already entertaining dreams of great political power.

The New York *Evening Post* on the eve of Buchanan's election, in an editorial entitled "The Conspiracy Against the Work-

ing Class," deplored the fact that "the less wealthy part of the Southern population are constantly migrating to free territory or to the western free states, where labor is held in honor. . . . Thus it is that the South casts out her offspring. . . . Free labor cannot live by the side of the oligarchy which tills the soil by the hands of its bondmen, and sells carpenters, blacksmiths and masons under the hammer. The free white laborer of the South finds that in a thin population public schools cannot be supported. The planter, with a domain of from three to ten thousand acres, can send his children to some private school or keep a tutor; but the poor man must see his children grow up in ignorance. No wonder that he should remove to a place where education is brought to his door, and where labor is no longer a badge of degradation."

The Lower South as a whole, however, did not make a bad showing in education. There were few lower schools, but then the planters did not believe in educating the masses. Jefferson Davis and his wife, visiting friends in Maine, were shocked to find in their household a girl from a poor and illiterate family, educated, they said, beyond her station in a way which could not fail to bring her unhappiness in later life. Unreconstructed Southerners to-day point out that the educated Negro is in much the same plight as the Maine servant girl.

Professor William E. Dodd has shown that the planters, at the outbreak of the war, were in the lead in the ratio of educational progress—even as this was conceived in the democratic and statistics-loving North—and were not far behind in education as a whole. In 1860 one child in every seven of the white population of the cotton states was in school for at least a term; in the rest of the country the ratio was one to five.

The three R's were neglected because it was not considered necessary to educate the plainer people; but higher education was patronized by a larger minority than in the North. The colleges of the Lower South in 1860 had all told eleven thousand students. The six New England States in the same year sent only 3,748 young men to their colleges: Massachusetts had half as many white people as all the cotton states combined, but she sent to college in 1860 only 1,733 students. The higher institutions of learning in the South had, in 1860, a total income of $708,000. The New England States spent yearly only $368,469 on collegiate education. The Southern colleges were on the whole as good as the Eastern. Agassiz was long deciding to leave the medical college at Charleston to take a post at Harvard. It is now a century-and-a-half old New England prejudice that the Southerners were unlettered: they were wary of new and crank ideas, and they missed the intellectual fashions that the East yearly imported from Europe, but in sound culture they were the equal of any Americans, and in their knowledge of the humanities superior to the New Englanders. General Richard Taylor went to see Charles Sumner, and afterwards wrote: "A rebel, a slave driver, and, without the culture of Boston, ignorant, I was an admirable vessel into which he could pour . . . his acquired eloquence."

3

The opulence and the expansive ease of the planter, his summers at Pass Christian or the Greenbrier White Sulphur, his winters at New Orleans and Charleston, his magnificent hospitality, had all been made possible by the honest labor of a swarm of English, Spanish, Portuguese and New England slave-

traders, who for a century and a half had landed cargoes of Negroes in New Orleans, or on the coasts of Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas.

The west coast of Africa and the jungles lying back of it were the field of the slave-trader's pious operations, but almost every tribe even in the remote interior was represented among the Negroes whose way was found for them to the shores of America. However, as the traders grew more experienced they learned to distinguish enormous differences among the tribes. The Whydahs, the Nagoes, and the Pawpaws, being docile, were found by most masters to be the ideal slaves. The Coromantees, or Fantyns, from the Gold Coast, on the other hand, were proud, haughty and fierce, and they often killed themselves rather than accept servitude. When they became slaves at all they were highly esteemed. "A man who cannot make a friend of a Coromantee," it was said, "does not deserve to have one." The Congoes and the Angolas from the far south were tractable, but they were stupid and shiftless. The Eboes were even stupider: to this day a slow-witted Negro who cannot rise above the level of a field hand is called "eboe." A shrewd slaver would not buy a Gaboon; he was too likely to die on the voyage.

The ultimate responsibility for slavery, of course, rests upon the native operators, who drove their fellow Negroes in herds to the coast where they went to the highest white bidder. The white men branded and shackled their purchases and crowded them into 'tween decks so low that they could not stand erect through the whole voyage—often a period of months—much as chickens and ducks are pressed into crates for the market. Comfort was expensive because space was valuable. But time was valuable, too; for if the voyage was long, the cargo might be

lost through disease. The Negroes, wallowing in their own ordure, took infectious diseases that often wiped them out, and the crew with them. The slave-trader had to be endowed with a certain mixture of courage and brutality.

On reaching America, he occasionally sold his cargo wholesale, but more often the sale was retail through factors who acted as brokers at the ports. The new Negroes, when they arrived at the plantation, were distributed among the old slaves, who taught them the language and ways of this strange land. The new hand was allowed three years for "seasoning," but sometimes he took longer to get used to his new home and to be of use to his master; some never became acclimatized and many died after a few months of the "bloody flux" or other diseases to which custom had made the old Negroes more or less immune.

The two million or more descendants of those who survived transplanting were, by 1850, widely scattered and their tribal differences amalgamated almost beyond recognition. They had no memory of their own country except in a few broken words which oddly checker the white man's vocabulary to this day. These two millions of Negroes were the foundation of the Cotton Kingdom, "the cornerstone of our new edifice," as Alexander H. Stephens called them in 1861, in a speech that was highly unphilosophical.

They lived, a conscript army of labor, in groups of cabins called the "quarters," located usually near the big plantation house. The cabins, according to the scale of rural living, were comfortable; their sanitation was systematically looked after by the master. The daily ration of the Negro was a quart of corn meal, half a pound of salt pork, and a little molasses, with smaller proportions for the children. This diet he supplemented with

peas, greens, sweet potatoes, and rice, and any other "garden sass" that he was able to raise in the plot of ground almost invariably allotted to him. Many slaves were permitted to raise a little nankeen cotton for their own profit; it was a brown variety easily distinguished from the master's staple kinds, a little of which otherwise the Negro might conceivably have stolen to augment his crop. The master bought the Negro's nankeen every year at the current price.

The clothing of the Negro was simplicity itself. The female field hand usually wore a single cotton garment reaching to the ankles. The man wore a coarse shirt and pantaloons. Both sexes wore a broad-brimmed straw hat. A Negro never wore shoes in the summer unless he was a house-servant. Shoes, a new suit, and a new hat were often issued to all hands as Christmas presents.

The house-servants were more elegant. Coachmen, butlers, "major domos" as the latter were sometimes called, wore impeccable broadcloth, and the women servants' starched petticoats rivaled their mistresses' crinolines. On the large plantations the female house-servants were so numerous and so well-dressed that their function was chiefly decorative. They did little work. I call to mind one old woman born in slavery who said that her chief duty was to set the chairs back from the table after each meal. But only the most intelligent and most courteous qualified for the household. These often enjoyed a high degree of confidence from their masters.

On every plantation a hierarchy of rank, privilege, and esteem was rigidly observed. The Negro man who had behind him the longest record of faithful service was the head of the tribe, and his wife the foster-mother of all the other Negroes. The plan-

tation "doctoress," who included midwifery in her accomplishments, was a high personage honored by both white and black. One doctoress boasted that she had not lost a case in two years, and the number of comfortable superannuates on the larger plantations attests to the thoroughness of the medical care that the masters provided for their Negroes. Physicians were regularly employed to make visits to the Negroes.

Once when something went wrong on Jefferson Davis's "Brierfield" plantation, the master asked his Negro overseer, James Pemberton, how it happened. James answered, "I rather think, sir, through my neglect." James was a remarkable man, but there were thousands like him. Almost every family could boast of a servant as honest, as faithful, and as intelligent as James.

The sufferings of the Negro came as a rule in the hands of the trader on the way to a new master. There are, in the annals of the Lower South, records of whippings, fetters, pursuit by bloodhounds, even death after flagrant disobedience. Lynching came after the Civil War, when the Negroes had been stirred to violence by the Northern whites. Not all the traders were as humane as the future General Nathan Bedford Forrest, who ordered that every Negro who came into his hands should be given a bath, a new suit of clothes, and a good drink. But such kindness could have little solace for a man who had just been taken away from his wife and children with little prospect of ever seeing them again: there were too many cases of separation between the husband and

> Darling Nellie Gray
> They have taken her away
> And I'll never see my darling any more. . . .

To do the migrating planters justice, however, they did all they could to keep families together—notably in the great trek from Virginia to the Lower South after 1800. The master carried with him, besides his family and his own slaves, all the "broad wives" —that is, wives owned abroad on neighboring plantations—whose masters could be induced to part with them. The despotism, but for rare exceptions, was benevolent, for it was to the planter's interest, aside from his kindness, to keep his "people" healthy and contented. It was an obligation rarely shirked. On the whole it may be said that out of the great evil of slavery had come a certain good: the master and the slave were forever bound by ties of association and affection that exceeded all considerations of interest. The injustice of the system consisted in two things: the first was the humiliation of the name—slavery; the other was that it gave the talented individual little chance to rise. Only in these two respects is the modern industrial laborer better off than the Negro slave: as a class he has no more than the slave's chance to better himself. He has the feeling, which the Negro lacked, of not belonging to an institution or a class—a void that he fills with cheap luxuries, cheap automobiles, cheap radios, cheap literatures; so that, because he is the major consumer of mass production, the production is diluted to his wants, and the higher values of all society are degraded. For society as a whole the modern system is probably inferior to that of slavery; the classes are not so closely knit; and the employer feels responsible to no law but his own desire. Industrialism comes in the end to absentee landlordism on a grand scale; this was comparatively rare in the Old South.

4

The Lower South before 1850 presented the anomaly of a society democratic in tone and professing democratic ideals yet resting upon a highly aristocratic social and economic system. This appearance of contradiction was steadily rectified from about 1830 until 1860 when it finally disappeared. For the system to which the Lower Southerners owed their prestige and power speedily brought with it a new social attitude, a new philosophy, and a spade was called a spade. Democracy, except in stump speeches, went by the boards.

The Lower South had naturally looked to the older communities—Virginia, Charleston, New Orleans—for its standards of manners and taste. Now these older and riper societies stepped forth into the philosophical breach, and supplied the explicit doctrine that Southerners, except for Jefferson's moment of heresy, had believed all along. The gradual repudiation of Jefferson reached the climax four years after his death, when the Virginia Constitutional Convention disclaimed the doctrine of the rights and the equality of man. Behind the scenes of the Convention stood Dr. Thomas R. Dew, a learned economist fresh from the German universities, whispering, from the text of Aristotle and the pages of Roman history, the new philosophy of inequality that the Lower South stood waiting for.

Dew defended slavery historically, showing that social organization was impossible without the inequality of some men whose status should be fixed. "The exclusive owners of property ever have been, ever will and perhaps ever ought to be the virtual rulers of mankind. . . . It is the order of nature and of God that the being of superior faculties and knowledge, and there-

fore of superior power, should control and dispose of those who are inferior."

Dew called upon Christianity to justify slavery, while his opponent, the abolitionist Devil, was quoting Scripture for his own purpose. But while he fortified his arguments with the two authorities most convincing to the Southern mind—the Bible and the literature of the Ancients—he thoughtfully added that slavery was economically profitable, not only in the Lower South, but in Virginia: the surplus Negroes could be sold to the more thriving Cotton Belt.

Dew was followed, in a few years, by the even more outspoken William Harper, of the South Carolina Supreme Court, who composed "A Memoir on Slavery." He wrote:

> To constitute a society a variety of offices must be discharged, from those requiring the very lowest degree of intellectual power to those requiring the very highest. It should seem that the endowments ought to be apportioned according to the exigencies of the situation. And the first want of a society is leaders.

It is worthy of comment that the last sentence might have come out of the works of Professor Irving Babbitt and other American humanists of to-day; but perhaps these humanists are corrupted with a little "humanitarianism" after all. We do not see them returning, through the difficulty of slavery, to their forerunner on their own soil who dared to argue his position to its consequences in the heat of social necessity—not in the socially futile atmosphere of the modern university.

The Lower Southerners believed that leaders would arise from the caste system which they now set about establishing. The great landowners were to be the rulers—as they already were—

and there was to be an intermediate class from which the professional men, the lawyers and physicians, were to be drawn. These were to be educated at the public expense. "The first care of a State which regards its own safety," wrote Harper, "should be that when minds of extraordinary power appear, to whatever department of knowledge, art, or science their exertions may be directed, the means should be provided for their most consummate cultivation." These men, educated under the caste system, would become its intellectual defenders, and make its blessings understood in all the land.

Utopian visions of the most advanced and beneficent social order ever in the world soon drew a rosy mist over the most speculative Southern eyes. In this state, which was already close to perfection, every white man would be free; every man, white or black, would be contented because he would be assured of a comfortable living. The abolition of poverty would do away with crime; and, indeed, Southerners could already point out that their jails were very poorly attended—doubtless because of slavery. Whatever the cause, it is certain that the average yearly expense of a county jail in Virginia from 1800 to 1860 was less than fifteen dollars. It was considerably higher in the Lower South in a less homogeneous population.

In spite of the imminence of Utopia there were some malcontents. Hinton R. Helper, an educated member of the poorer class, published, in 1857, a book entitled *The Impending Crisis in the South: How to Meet It.* It became a best-seller—in the North; but his neighbors were not impressed. He argued that slavery doomed the landless whites to perpetual degradation, and even degraded the landed. The book was banned in the South—"burnt by the common hangman." More often it was

discreetly ignored. An editorial in the New York *Tribune,* on January 12, 1860, said: "It is Helper on the counter, Helper at the stand, Helper in the shop and out of the shop, Helper here, Helper there, Helper everywhere." The book was smuggled into the South by Northern propagandists in boxes labeled hardware, coffee, calico.

Earlier—1846—Daniel Goodlow argued that Southern land would be worth as much without the Negroes, that capital was tied up in Negroes that could be better invested otherwise. But, the planters replied, the argument granted, what would become of the Negroes? Who would control and care for them? The problem was insoluble.

And yet, the great wealth of the planter was illusory. Very little of his money stayed in his own pocket. The bulk of the profits from a cotton crop went to enrich the Yankee merchants who supplied the plantation with the manufactured articles necessary for its upkeep. The South was a source of enormous profit to the North, and the South resented her plight. The North, getting so much, began, under a panoply of moral purpose, to wonder why she didn't get more: why not get it all? And so the air thickened as time went on.

Southern money stayed north, and Southerners clamored for a cessation of "paying toll to New England." Far-sighted Southerners looked forward to building mills of their own, and the new plans were being discussed by the leaders. By 1860 cotton mills were running in South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia. . . .

The planter class, enjoying a perfect leisure under the slavery régime, devoted their energies to politics—which meant, after 1830, imperialistic expansion. The Mexican War had added New

Mexico and California, and extended the Texas boundary to the Rio Grande. They dreamed of a great empire that would embrace, eventually, all of Latin America. The history of Congress after 1840, until 1860, is one bitter struggle of the Southern politicians to gain the preponderance of power which would enable them to direct the politics of the country in the interest of their imperialistic dream. When Abraham Lincoln was elected on a platform of no quarter to the slavery expansionists, the planters prepared to leave the Union. But not primarily to realize their imperialism: they withdrew to perpetuate a stable and deeply rooted way of living, which, they foresaw, the restless industrial society of the North would gradually exterminate.

The Lower South by 1860 was a distinct nation. It differed from the North as deeply as the United States differs from Great Britain to-day. The war for the Union was justified by a fiction—that the states were one nation. When historians are far enough from the event, they will speak of the years 1861-1865 as the period of the dual Presidency. Their vision cleared, they will see the Lower South in its unique quality, and wonder what, if it had been left alone, it might have become.

CHAPTER III

DAVIS AND THE LOWER SOUTH

I

ON a spring day of 1843 Mr. Joseph Emory Davis could have been seen strolling in the extensive grounds of his great plantation, "The Hurricane," in southwestern Mississippi. At his side walks a beautiful and clever girl, Miss Varina Howell, of Natchez, whose father is his old and close friend. Miss Varina calls him affectionately, Uncle Joe; she is seventeen—a young lady with her hair up—and she is paying Uncle Joe the visit he has been looking forward to for several years. Standing near the river she looks up to admire the large rambling house set in the midst of a magnificent grove of live oaks, the wide double gallery almost concealed by the luxurious vegetation. The central part is two-storied, with an attic, gabled; at one end an enormous addition contains two rooms, one above, one below, each forty-three by twenty-five feet. Some distance to the rear of the house, at one side, stands the great white-washed stable with stalls for thirty thoroughbred horses; every stall is occupied; a small army of Negro hostlers bustles about it. Still farther away through the dense tangle of vegetation, which gives to the mansion its rather melancholy grandeur, she sees a village of small cabins, brilliantly white in the sun; these are the quarters of the servants—the hundreds of servants who make the great plantation a little town.

As they approach the house Mr. Davis explains that storms blew parts of it down years ago, and that is why he calls it "The Hurricane." They enter a wide hall, open—it being warm in the early southern spring—at both ends. The two rooms on the right are the drawing-room and the "tea-room," for the ladies; on the left are the bedroom of the master and the "office"—the latter, against Southern custom, a part of the main house, instead of a small building detached. Patiently, but perhaps with a certain interest, Miss Varina permits herself to be shown into every room, including a storeroom just off Mr. Davis's private chamber. Here, in bewildering profusion, lie shotguns, rifles, pistols, ammunitions; candy, shoes for the Negroes; plaid linsey or calico for consolation to the widows; farm implements; saddles and bridles; pocket knives, nails, screws—all the things, says Mr. Davis, for the needs of "each after his kind." From the "arsenal" —as Miss Varina calls it—they go on to the large annex. The lower room is the dining room, paved with red brick highly polished. Upstairs is the "music room," the ceiling is arched, and the room is flooded with light. Here the children play charades or give mock concerts, and the guests play and sing. Round the walls hang the family portraits in heavy frames.

Mr. Joe Davis leads Miss Varina to a painting of a vigorous man of about sixty, handsome but gaunt; there is a certain distinction in the face, as there is in all portraits of this period; for the wandering artists who record the generation know best how not to offend their patrons. After a moment, Mr. Davis says:

"My father. He was a good soldier, a good citizen, a good master to his Negroes, and the best rider in the country—looked like one of Charles's Cavaliers on horseback, as one would imag-

ine Peveril of the Peak looked—Jefferson reminds me of him at times so much that it startles me. . . ."

The transformation of the Davis family in one generation from insecure small farmers into great planters, and the growth of the patriarchal idea, whereby Samuel Davis, a plain man, became the symbol of knightly grace—and the fountainhead of wisdom to his children, for they remembered him with increasing awe—this process of expansion in one family is the story of the rise of the Lower South.

The childhood of Joseph and Jefferson Davis was spent in surroundings very different from those of "The Hurricane." In the year 1812, when Jefferson was four years old, the family moved, for the third time since his birth, from St. Mary's Parish, in southern Louisiana, up into Wilkinson County, in southwestern Mississippi. Samuel Davis, their father, was a typically restless pioneer of the old Southwest, sturdy, plain, hard-working; painfully honorable and deeply religious; not faring very well nor taking to himself the air of a superior class; unaristocratic, for there was no aristocracy in the primitive day of the frontier. He had come to Wilkinson County less out of restlessness and the desire to get on, than to get way from the mosquitoes of St. Mary's Parish, where his family, used to the more temperate climate of Kentucky, were ill and dissatisfied.

When the new Davis home was finished the family "broke camp" and moved into the house. It was a "comfortable brown cottage with servants' out-houses . . . a plain but comfortable frame dwelling, one and a half stories high, of six rooms, four on the ground floor and two on the second, large brick chimneys, glass windows, and verandas the full length of the house." The ground sloped on one side down to a spring, from which "a

crystal spring ripples through the forest." Mrs. Davis, contrary to the rough pioneer custom, made a flower garden in the yard round the house; sweet pinks lined the paths about the yard. There was a pear tree under which "little Jeff," as he was called, played with his nieces and nephews, who were his own age. There were fig trees, and by them rows of "bee gums." There were a few Negroes on the place, and every morning Samuel Davis led them to the cotton fields, or the fields of corn, where he worked with them, side by side, through the heat of the day. . . . He is a restless man, but he will do better here than he has ever done before. . . .

By 1844 a great change has come over the Davis family and over the Lower South. Joseph Davis has been settled for years at his plantation, breeding thoroughbred horses, leading the easy life of a wealthy planter. His father dead, he is now the head of the family, and he has been a true father to his younger brother, Jefferson, to whom, eight years ago, he gave a neighboring plantation and sold, on credit, fourteen slaves. He has prospered beyond measure. He is a distinguished lawyer, and one of the leading citizens of the state.

The growth of his section, southern Mississippi, has been almost as rapid as his own rise. There have been in southern Mississippi, up to 1815, three distinct social stages, in which three kinds of immigration poured, over a period of forty years, into the Territory. The first settlers took up lands along the river from New Orleans to Natchez: these people were Tories for the most part, fleeing to the neutral far west from South Carolina and Georgia, even from New England. They got the best lands —the rich, alluvial soil of the river bottoms. By 1790 another wave of settlers came down the river by boat from Virginia

and Kentucky and Tennessee, or overland from the states of Georgia and South Carolina. These mingled with the first settlers; in time absorbed them with their greater numbers; and pushed back from the river lands to the east. There they met the third wave of settlers, the overflow of the unprosperous from the seacoast states, who filled the unfertile pine-barrens of the Pearl River county in south-central Mississippi. The stage was set here, as elsewhere in the Lower South, for the rapid stratification of society under the influence of King Cotton. The lowlanders, getting rich in the cotton industry, were to be a powerful squireocracy made almost over night; the Pearl River people, less fortunate in having come too late, or less enterprising, were to be at best small farmers, at worst (the majority) "poor whites."

2

The Davis family was in most respects typical of the population of the Lower South. They were, even in the generation of the distinguished Jefferson, a "new family," and they had in their veins none of the blood of the leading houses of the older parts of the South. But they were not the less typical for this, nor for their having originated in the North. Jefferson's grandfather, Evan Davis, had been born in Philadelphia in 1702 of Welsh immigrant parents—"John Davis of Pencader Hundred in the County of New Castle upon Delaware Turner and Anne Davis his wife." John Davis, it appears, could not sign his name; he made his X-mark. Little or nothing is known of the boyhood of Evan Davis: we know that he migrated to Oglethorpe's Georgia colony, where he settled on the Peedee River in a community of Baptists. There he married in 1755 a widow, Mrs.

Williams, whose maiden name was Emory. The widow brought to the marriage two sons, and by Evan Davis she had one more—Samuel Emory Davis, born in 1756. At this point Evan Davis disappears from the story; it is said that his grave may be identified in the Davis burial ground near Washington, Georgia, but this doubtful grave is not so well-preserved as an Indian chief's that lies near by.

The Davises were originally Welsh Quakers, and that is no doubt why they came to Pennsylvania. But the migration southward of Evan Davis followed the line of the Scotch-Irish immigrants, who came in vast numbers to the colonies every year beginning about 1730. They landed mostly at two ports—Philadelphia and Charleston. Those who came to Philadelphia moved westward, then turned south at the Shenandoah Valley, and pushed farther into North Carolina and on to the South Carolina and Georgia border—where they met another stream of new settlers who had landed at Charleston. These "border Southerners" became the Indian fighters and the pioneers of the old Southwest, and the Davises differed from them chiefly in being Welsh. It was these Scotch-Irish, hardy, proud, land-hungry, who won, by the opening of the nineteenth century, not only the Cotton Kingdom, but the old Northwest. They "kept the Sabbath and everything else they could lay their hands on."

By the time the Revolution began Evan Davis was dead, but his step-sons joined the Revolutionary army, followed, at the age of seventeen, by their half-brother Samuel Davis. Samuel Davis fought in many different commands in a fierce guerilla war, for Georgia and the Carolinas were ravaged by wandering bands of the British and the Tories. He became captain of an irregular company, and at the end of the war he went home—to find his

mother dead and the property destroyed. He was given land near Augusta, Georgia, for his military services, and made clerk of the new County of Washington, then on the frontier. About 1783 he was married to Miss Jane Cook, of South Carolina, whom he had met during the war. Tradition makes her a niece of General Nathanael Greene.

"She was of Scotch-Irish descent, and was noted for her beauty and sprightliness of mind. She had a graceful, poetic mind. . . . " So wrote her son Jefferson long after she had died; it tells us exactly nothing. A grandchild, still later, wrote that "Grandmother was uncommon in looks and intellect. Handsome in age,—very fair with large blue eyes, regular features and brown hair." Samuel Davis was "usually of a grave and stoical character . . . a silent, undemonstrative man of action. He talked little, and never in general company, but what he said had great weight with the community in which he lived." Jefferson Davis wrote this long after he had absorbed the ideals of the aristocratic Lower South. While there is no way to prove that Samuel Davis was not oracularly wise, it is possible that he was not; for the impulse of every agrarian ruling class is to identify its power with inherited responsibility.

This identification of power and responsibility is the best basis for a society; in the Lower South it produced a genuine ruling class. Men were bound by their responsibility to a definite physical legacy—land and slaves—which more and more, as Southern society tended to become stable after 1850, checked the desire for mere wealth and power. Men are everywhere the same, and it is only the social system that imposes a check upon the acquisitive instinct, accidentally and as the condition of a certain prosperity, that in the end makes for stability and creates

the close ties among all classes which distinguished a civilization from a mere social machine. Only the agricultural order in the past has achieved this.

However wise Samuel Davis may have been, it is certain that he was a man of fine character—well fitted to sire the leader of a great society—all the great leaders of which came from much the same stock. After the decline of the Virginian rule in Southern statesmanship, nearly all the distinguished public men—from Calhoun to Quitman, Prentiss, Yancey, Davis—were descended from the Scotch-Irish border Southerners, or were immigrants from other sections.

After less than a decade of farming near Augusta, Samuel Davis left Georgia for the Kentucky wilderness. He settled in what is now Todd County, a little to the west of the extreme south-central part of the new state, near the Tennessee line. He arrived in 1792; the first settlement had been made in that region only seven years before; wandering Indians still infested the woods. He built a rude pioneer cabin, a "double-pen log house"; there were two rooms on each side of the "dog run" which was roofed over but not closed at the ends; the chimneys were mud and sticks; the floors, puncheon; the doors swung on wooden hinges; the entire house was held together with hand-made nails and wooden pegs. The farm was about six hundred acres; the crops were tobacco—the money-making staple,—corn and wheat. Samuel Davis raised horses, and he is supposed to have kept a "Wayfarer's Rest" where he served food and drink to man and beast. He evidently liked his farm, for he stayed in Kentucky nineteen years. It was there that most of his children were born.

The tenth and last child of Samuel and Jane Davis was Jefferson, born on the Kentucky frontier farm on June 3rd, 1808.

He was named Jefferson for the current President—the only Davis child who was not named from the Bible. Nothing whatever is known of his few years there, except that he was called "Little Jeff"; for, when he was three, the family moved again.

3

This time Samuel Davis decided to go south to the new cotton country which was drawing thousands of men from the worn-out lands of the older South, and as many more from other parts of the country. Instead of loading his household goods on a flatboat on the Cumberland River, not far from the Todd County farm, and floating out into the Mississippi, then down to Louisiana, whither he was bound, he made the trip overland, a distance of six hundred miles. The country was a wilderness, and at least one of the Negroes, a man called Samson, had a deadly fear of the packs of wolves howling round the camp at night. All ten children accompanied the parents, and the trip took two months.

The residence in Louisiana was, as we have seen, very brief, but the next homestead, in Wilkinson County, Mississippi Territory, was to be the last that Samuel Davis would build: his children needed a more settled life, and he was getting old: he was fifty-six in 1812. He at last became a good farmer—not rich enough to be called a planter—but now that his older children began to marry, all he could give to them, at each marriage, was one Negro slave. And that was all they ever got.

Right after 1812 lower Mississippi became a seething chaos of immigrants, whose violence was typical of frontier times. The old communities, founded under the Spanish régime, were

broken up, and it was not till about 1835 that the interests of King Cotton became fixed and all parties admitted his rule. There were two principal towns—Natchez, the cotton market on the river, and Washington, where cultivated people of the old order lived. Both towns were scenes of political violence between the new unwashed Democrats and the older, more respectable Federalists, or Whigs, as they now called themselves. Duelling was a weekly or more frequent occurrence, for gentlemen who lived on isolated farms were sure to have differences that had to be settled. Jefferson Davis, a little boy, was not much affected by these common affairs of his day. As a small child he went to the nearest log schoolhouse, where the teacher knew only the three R's; or he picked cotton with his father and the Negroes in the field.

He had the usual amusements of boys in a primitive region: he hunted and fished, he had dogs and he rode horses. He learned a great deal about the care of horses and their breeds, but he failed to master the details of the cotton industry, that unifier of Southern life, the one element in the Lower South that was definitely to distinguish it from other sections. When he was still a school boy he came home one day saying that his teacher had assigned to him a lesson beyond his power to learn in the given time. His father promptly put him in the cotton fields, saying he must choose labor or education. After two days of cotton picking, he chose the latter—not so much because it promised immunity to hard physical work, but—in his own phrase—because of the "implied equality" with the field hands. His father had evidently not objected to such an inference, and it was a disquieting tendency in the son.

In 1815, Jefferson then being seven years old, his father sent

him back to Kentucky to a better school. Samuel Davis was more prosperous than he had ever been, and he had determined to give the youngest child, at least, the best education of his place and time. It was summer, and a Major Hinds, just from the war under Andrew Jackson, agreed to take the boy along with his own young son, who was Jefferson's age. The party rode horseback, a few Negroes attending to the pack mules. At Nashville, they all paid a visit to "Old Hickory," who impressed the future Democratic leader—but of how different a Democracy!—with his "gentle and considerate" manners, his "unruffled, well-bred courtesy." A remarkable observation for a boy of seven: not so remarkable when we remember that Davis actually made it after the Civil War, trying to recall the event.

The school of St. Thomas Aquinas had been founded by four Dominicans in 1807, at Springfield, and here for two years Jefferson Davis studied his Latin grammar, and lived in the room of one of the priests, Father Angier, because he was the smallest boy in school. At that time in Kentucky the best schools were run by Catholics. The Protestant clergy were not so well educated as the priests, and the warring of the sects delayed the cause of Protestant schools for a generation, and drove many people away from the churches. The population of Kentucky in 1820 was more than a half-million, but there were only 40,000 church members, and the field was divided between the Catholics and the free-thinkers. The latter were perhaps not too free in thought, for they were led by a Connecticut Unitarian, Dr. Horace Holley, who was elected in 1817 to the Presidency of Transylvania University, at Lexington.

In 1817, Jefferson's mother insisted that he come home, which he did; and he was sent to schools nearer home until 1821 and

his fourteenth year, when he once more started north to enter the freshman class of Transylvania University. Again, but not for the last time, he was to come under influences different from those of the Lower South, for the atmosphere of Transylvania was then perhaps the most truly national of all colleges in America.

It was also probably the best college at that time, and certainly the most popular. It had the largest student body in America when Davis enrolled, and the best faculty; the courses were as advanced as at Yale or Harvard; the medical library was the best in the United States. The academic course was mainly the classics, with ancient history, mathematics, oratory thrown in. Davis became well-grounded in the classics, especially Latin, and formed the habit of omnivorous reading; so that he became the best informed, possibly the best educated, man in the United States Senate.

Here boys from all over the West, which but for Missouri went only as far as the Mississippi River, received the hard, old-fashioned classical education from instructors who lectured from no sectional bias whatever. West of the mountains the only sectional interest perceptible was slowly developing in the lower Mississippi basin; but farther to the north the people felt themselves to be Americans. Kentucky and Tennessee were as closely bound to Illinois and Indiana as to Alabama and Mississippi, more closely than to South Carolina and Georgia. For these northwestern states were settled exclusively down to 1850, except the extreme northern fringe, by Southern people, and it was only the later railroad connections with the East, backed by the subtle influence of living for a generation on "free soil," that decided their allegiance in the coming war. The continuation of

the feeling of pioneer nationalism in Kentucky hardly less than in Indiana and Illinois was later to preserve the geographical Union. The issue of the war fixed the Ohio River as the sectional boundary, but recent investigation has shown that the boundary was a broad belt including all of Kentucky and the southern halves of the states just to the north. There was clamorous sympathy for secession in southern Indiana; and southern Illinois, wedged between the slave states of Kentucky and Missouri, was agitated for secession into the Confederacy by a powerful group of men led by a certain futile, and now utterly obliterated, W. H. Green.

In an atmosphere charged with these eventualities, with this division of purpose, Jefferson Davis received the important groundwork of his education. He had been at Transylvania three years, and he had been away from home six years all told, without vacations. Four years had been spent—his first four—in the purely frontier region of southern Kentucky, and one year in Louisiana. The six other years of his seventeen he had passed on a cotton farm—not a plantation—where the life was hardly typical of the ultimate purposes of his section. His teachers, after the time of the log schoolhouse, were none of them Southern men. At the Catholic school they had been English; in Mississippi, a Scotchman and a Bostonian; at Transylvania, Scotchmen, Frenchmen, Irishmen, New Englanders. He was now about to go still farther afield. His father, a few months before he died in the summer of 1824, got his youngest son an appointment to West Point. The appointment was dated March 11, 1824, and it was signed by John C. Calhoun, Secretary of War under President Monroe. For the first time, but not for the last, the names of these two men came together.

4

Joseph Emory Davis, recently returned from Kentucky to Mississippi, where in Warren County he was starting his "Hurricane Plantation," was now as eldest brother the guardian of young Jefferson. He urged him to accept the appointment to West Point: he was too young to take a college degree, only the next year, and to begin life in the rough country of southern Mississippi. To this Jefferson agreed, but it was understood that after a year at the military academy he was to go to the University of Virginia. But he stayed at West Point, and a military cast of mind was to become habitual. The great friend of his life became a soldier—Albert Sidney Johnston; he knew at West Point, besides, Joseph E. Johnston, with whom he is supposed to have fought over a girl; Robert E. Lee, who was noted at the Academy for his humorless rectitude; Leonidas Polk, later famous in the Confederacy as the "fighting bishop." He was "distinguished in the corps for his manly bearing, his high-toned and lofty character. His figure was very soldier-like and rather robust; his springy step resembling the tread of an Indian brave on the war-path."

Nevertheless, he was among the first set of young men courtmartialed for drinking at "Benny Haven's," a tavern two miles from the Academy grounds. Davis was by no means a pious young man, and he carried his petty dissipations with an air; his own defense before the courtmartial was not unlike Scott's defense of Byron, who preserved in the midst of his errors the "manners of a gentleman." He was charged with drinking "spirituous liquors" and his answer to the charge, at this early date, was that of a strict constructionist. He said that drinking

at Benny Haven's was nowhere *officially* prohibited in the regulations, and that malt liquors were not spirituous. Davis was a very high-spirited boy, and life at the Point was monotonous in those days. He always stood considerably below the average in "deportment"; he seems to have achieved this distinction chiefly at Benny Haven's, where the favorite song, as endless in its verses as the "Lydia Pinkham" of students to-day, was:

> To our comrades who have fallen, one cup before we go,
> They poured their life-blood freely out *pro bono publico;*
> No marble points the stranger to where they rest below,
> They lie neglected far away from Benny Haven's, O! . . .
> O Benny Haven's, O! O, Benny Haven's, O!

Benny Haven was probably the source of the great cadet riot of 1826. Davis and the other Southerners organized an eggnog party for the enlightenment of their less favored Northern friends, but just as the party began, a boy rushed in shouting, "Put away that grog, boys, old Hitch is coming." Old Hitch was Captain Hitchcock, whom the cadets mobbed. Davis was caught and sent under arrest to his room, and so escaped the further misconduct of driving the officers out of the hall with stove wood. Nineteen cadets were dismissed, and Davis kept under arrest for a long time. Joseph E. Johnston and Robert E. Lee had refused to come to the party.

At the end of Jefferson's first year his eldest brother came to see him, and brought Mr. and Mrs. William B. Howell of Natchez. When the boat landed, a "very stout, florid young fellow came running down to the landing-place and caught Mr. Joseph E. Davis in his arms. He said little. . . ." He had "beautiful blue eyes, a graceful, strong figure. He slipped his hand

through his brother's arm, and sat very close to him, but otherwise made no sign of feeling except a silent caress."

At West Point Davis received his lowest marks in mathematics, his highest in "Rhetoric and Moral Philosophy." The Reverend C. P. McIlvain taught this course, which included a survey of American constitutional law. The text was that of Judge Rawle of Pennsylvania, whose doctrine was commonplace at the time:

> If a faction should attempt to subvert the government of a State for the purpose of destroying its republican form, the national power of the Union could be called forth to subdue it. Yet it is not to be understood that its interposition would be justifiable if a State should determine to retire from the Union. . . . The secession of a State from the Union depends on the will of the people of such a State.

It has been said that Davis learned secession at West Point, and he himself was inclined to make Rawle's *View of the Constitution* a more important influence on his later thought than it was. The interesting thing about his study of Rawle is not the doctrine, but the fact that he did better with the course than with any other. The main part of his education as a soldier, mathematics, he neglected for the theory of government, and for wide but scattered browsing in history. But his general standing was not high: when he was graduated, in the summer of 1828, as second lieutenant in the United States Army, he stood number twenty-three in a class of thirty-four.

In the minor accomplishments of war he became highly proficient. He was military in bearing, and he preferred soldiering to any other career. He left West Point with an immense faith in "West Pointism"—the belief that only trained soldiers

could succeed in war. He was, in fact, a martinet, and he was destined, in a great crisis, to rely upon his military education and to fritter away his energy signing commissions for second lieutenants. He took away from West Point two things: a belief in education as the remedy for all ills, and a haughty pride, an impatience with the imperfections of simple men, that would not be chastened out of him until years later when, under guard, he should pay a visit to Fortress Monroe.

Lieutenant Davis now began his career as a soldier in the Northwest frontier, still farther than West Point from his own people. The new exile lasted longer than any of the others—seven years.

5

It was full of hardship, peril, and adventure. More than once he barely escaped with his life. The duty, nearly the whole duty, of the army posts in the frontier country of Wisconsin and Iowa was to keep the Indians in check, so that the settlers could get a foothold. Once Davis with a few men was chased by a band of Indians: both parties were in canoes, but Davis improvised a sail, and got away. He was quick-witted, resourceful, and absolutely fearless. In a terrible winter he almost died of pneumonia; for although he was sturdily built his chronic nervous instability made illness go hard with him. But he was a good soldier in a kind of warfare that was hardly war: there were no large bodies of troops, and there were no complex problems of strategy. Davis's whole early career was to strengthen the illusion that he had great talent for war.

When Black Hawk was captured in 1832, Colonel Zachary Taylor appointed Davis as the chief's escort to Jefferson Barracks:

Black Hawk respected the young lieutenant for his kind and courteous treatment, and Davis admired Black Hawk, who, he said with characteristic unpolitical candor, was the real hero of the war. Davis was a promising young officer, but of another young man who served in the Black Hawk War there was a different story to tell. Abraham Lincoln, by a liberal use of frontier whiskey, had on one occasion almost disgraced the volunteer service; he was a poor soldier; but when a great crisis came, he knew that he knew nothing of war, and that he had everything to learn.

Taylor's appointment of Davis to command the guard of Black Hawk seems to disprove the belief that old "Rough and Ready" had an instinctive prejudice against the somewhat fastidious young officer. Further disproof of that belief is the fact that Taylor knew Davis was in love with his daughter. Just the year before (1831) Davis had been ordered down from the far Northwest to Fort Crawford, where Colonel Taylor was commandant, and there, for the first time in three years, he saw women who were not married, or who were not squaws. Taylor opposed Davis's "suit," for two reasons: the proud young man was penniless, and he would not be able to retire from the army. The hardbitten old Indian fighter may not have liked the young man's high and mighty ways, but the real objection seems to have been that he was a soldier: Taylor was dead-set against letting his daughters repeat the hardships his wife had gone through. The young couple were equally set upon marrying, and after about four years of intrigue and hostility between father and would-be son-in-law, which almost came to a duel, Jefferson Davis and Sarah Knox Taylor were married, at the home of her aunt, near Louisville, Kentucky, on June 17, 1835.

Miss Knox Taylor was "very beautiful, slight, and not very tall, with wavy brown hair and clear gray eyes, very lovely and lovable and a young woman of decided spirit. She was dressed in a dark traveling dress with a small hat to match."

"Lieutenant Davis was dressed in a long-tail cutaway coat, brocaded waistcoat, breeches tight-fitting and held under the instep with a strap, and a high stovepipe hat. He was of a slender build, had polished manners, and was of a quiet, intellectual countenance."

The ceremony was performed by the Reverend Mr. Ashe of Christ Church, Louisville, in the midst of a great number of relatives on the Taylor side, and "after the service everybody cried but Davis, and the Taylor children thought this most peculiar."

If Colonel Taylor's objection to the match was simply a dislike of having his daughter marry into the army, Davis had already met it by resigning; and his brother, Joseph Emory Davis, now rich, had met the objection to his poverty by giving him a plantation in Warren County, Mississippi, next to "The Hurricane," and by selling him, on credit, fourteen slaves. . . .

Jefferson Davis's life up to 1835 had been a miracle of good fortune, but he had learned almost nothing, for he had suffered no checks to his easy career. The son of a Southern pioneer farmer of less than moderate means, he had received the best education of his time, without any effort on his part whatever, and without any of that enlightening adversity which alone seems to season the character of men. His eldest brother, twenty-four years his senior, immediately replaced his father and smoothed his path to the end. His intelligence and integrity had enabled him to take advantage of opportunities created for him

by others: he had made none of these opportunities for himself. He was now about to set up as a cotton planter, on land won by the patient effort of another, and not even inherited in the regular line of responsibility from father to son. It is no wonder that he never quite understood how practical affairs are carried on. He had not gained any discipline over his feelings, for this comes by adversity or by long training to a traditional ideal; nor did he understand that moral and political convictions are the complex product of feeling; for he supposed these to be matters of reason. Before he entered politics he was convinced that people who disagreed with him were insincere.

6

About seven weeks after the young couple had arrived at "Brierfield," the new plantation, Mrs. Davis wrote a letter to her mother:

> . . . Write to me, my dear mother, as often as you can find time, and tell me all concerning you. Do not make yourself uneasy about me, the country is quite healthy.

But, eager to get the plantation going, they stayed too long in Mississippi, and got to Louisiana, out of the fever region, too late. At the home of Davis's sister, Mrs. Luther Smith, they both came down with malarial fever. Davis was too ill to be told how ill his wife was, but in her delirium she sang fragments of an old song, "Fairy Bells," and he came to her bedside to see her die unconscious. She had always said she expected to die young. After a long struggle Davis got well.

He returned to Mississippi, and the most important period of

his life began. The shock of his bride's sudden death threw him in upon himself. He went little into the neighborhood society, and he became a studious recluse. How far this life was deliberate it is difficult to say, but he was ambitious, and his brother was possibly even more ambitious for him: it was a time of preparation for politics. But it was a singular kind of preparation, and better suited to a career of letters or of pedagogy. The theory of the state may be learned in the cloister, but politics only in the street. However, Davis read enormously in history and the theory of government, and a political career was the only use such training could be put to. At the present time, Davis would doubtless have become a professor of politics, or a man of letters; but in his own day, the former career was limited, the latter not respectable. William Gilmore Simms, who did more than any other man to build up a Southern literature, found that his profession compromised his social prestige, and was more highly respected in England than in South Carolina. Politics was the only career esteemed unreservedly by the planter class, because politics was its strongest protection.

His elder brother was, in this period of seclusion from 1835 to 1845, almost his sole companion, and "the brothers occupied their evenings with conversations on grave subjects, and during the day found abundant occupation attending to their plantations." The grave subjects centered round the interpretation of the Constitution, which the wrangling over the tariff after 1816 and Nullification in South Carolina in 1832 had made the leading issue of the South. Joseph Davis had a good library, and Jefferson was collecting one. The Constitution was held by the brothers to be a sacred document, and Jefferson at least knew it by heart, and knew by heart also nearly all the debates of

the framers which were collected in that vast work, *Elliott's Debates*. Hardly less sacred than the Constitution, the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1799, the first victory of the strict constructionists against the Federalists, was a final authority in any discussion of the rights of the States. The brothers were both Democrats in a society that was ruled by the Whigs. They read the bound volumes of *The Federalist* and the *National Intelligencer,* the powerful Whig organ in Washington, but only to confute them.

The Democracy of the Davis brothers was a mixture of early influence and political insight. Samuel Davis, the poor farmer, was inevitably a member of the Jeffersonian party, while the rich, North and South, were Federalists, or Whigs. The great mass of the Southern people were poor and Democratic, but the "rich and the well-born"—Hamilton's phrase—were everywhere Whigs: the interests of the cotton capitalists were not, so early, differentiated from the interests of capital generally. But this differentiation of interest was coming, and Jefferson Davis, following Calhoun, foresaw it. It was to create the Southern Rights party which the Democrats absorbed together with most of the Whigs. In the party upheaval of 1844, the Democrats became conservatives of the South; Jefferson and Jackson were repudiated. When the cotton magnates went over to the Democracy, they joined hands with the poorer people, and in the end created a united South. It was this that Calhoun had worked for all along, and Davis was shrewd enough to see the necessity for it in advance of most Southerners.

Not all his reading was in politics, as might have been the case had he been a self-made man of single ambition, like Alexander H. Stephens or Andrew Johnson; he read widely in

fiction, and even more widely in poetry. He read Shakespeare as most Southerners did, in order to recite the lines as oratory; but he hated Milton, and could not read him. He read Campbell, Moore, Byron, Scott—the last being inevitable, as we shall see, in the reading of a man in the South. And, later, he read Arthur Hugh Clough, who, with his severe and intellectual morality, was a little off the beaten track of Southern taste. All of his reading was browsing; he was never a scholar in any field; and he was thus typical of the educated man of his time. There was no specialization in the Southern learning, the basis of which was the classics. Davis read Latin well, and knew Greek. His sole known study of economics was Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*—a singularly inadequate preparation for the understanding of the nineteenth century industrial world, containing no formula to exorcise the subsequent delusion that cotton was king.

As a planter Jefferson Davis prospered, and yet he was constantly advised by his more experienced brother, so that it is hard to say what he might have done alone. He was more than kind to his Negroes: the Davis brothers introduced into the slave system certain reforms that were so successful that, after 1865, their Negroes were singled out as examples of the talent of their race for citizenship. It was forgotten that they had acquired their talent as slaves. There was no corporal punishment given to the Negroes by white overseers, for the overseer was a Negro; every Negro was tried for offense by a jury of his peers, who were not obligated by the master to return a conviction of whipping, although they sometimes did. Occasionally the master, who reserved the right of pardon, had to temper the severity of the Negro jury. Jefferson Davis and his overseer—James Pemberton,

a Negro—were devoted friends. When the overseer came to see Mr. Jefferson Davis in his "office," the master pulled up a chair and said, "Sit down, James." When James left Mr. Davis gave him a cigar. James was always James, not Jim as he would have been on most plantations; nor would Jefferson Davis permit the other Negroes to receive nicknames. "It is disrespect to give a nickname," he said. Every Negro who could make money for himself was encouraged. He did business with his Negroes, and at the end of one transaction he owed a Negro two thousand dollars. No slavery system is good simply because it involves slavery; but in the hands of the Davis brothers and thousands like them it entailed more responsibility than abuse.

7

On a high bluff on the east bank of the Mississippi near Natchez stood an old-fashioned house, very large and surrounded by verandas, called "The Briers," the home of Mr. W. B. Howell, a wealthy cotton planter. Mr. Howell was a native of New Jersey who had come to Mississippi about 1818 and married a Miss Kempe. The Kempes were Virginians: Mrs. Howell's father had migrated to Mississippi early enough to fight under Andrew Jackson. The family of "The Briers" were thus typical of the Lower South, where all sections were united. The old town of Natchez, composed of three streets running one way and four the other, had gone ahead of Washington, the old social capital; it was now—1843—the center of the Whig, the planter aristocracy of that region. In the midst of the three and the four streets stood the white-columned court-house. Swayback old gentlemen slowly walked through the court-house yard; young men, dressed

in bright blue or light brown coats with silver buttons, cantered by on fine horses; great family coaches, preceded by black outriders, the gilded family arms glistening in the semi-tropical sun, clattered and bumped on the hard clay streets.

A year ago Mr. Joseph Emory Davis had asked his old friend, Mr. Howell, to let Miss Varina come to visit him at "The Hurricane," but the answer had been that Miss Varina, then sixteen, might not come until the next year when she had finished her course in the classics. She was a remarkably clever girl, and she was receiving an unusual education for her time, under the guidance of old Judge Winchester, a scholar and jurist from Salem, Massachusetts. The classics seem to have been covered by December, 1843, for, after the usual domestic flutter with silks and needles, Miss Varina, chaperoned by her tutor, set forth, on the palatial steamboat "Magnolia," on the journey to the Davis family.

The Mississippi steamboats were larger then than they are now, and more magnificent. People half a generation before the eighteen-forties had been astonished by the three great boats plying regularly up and down the river—the "Vesuvius," the "Aetna," and the "Volcano"—but the "Magnolia" was even grander than these. The staterooms and saloons and decks were luxurious, and the food exquisite; there were libraries with the latest novels; and there were shower-baths. At every landing—every river planter had his private landing—the boat stopped to unload farm implements, ice, clothing, newspapers, books, from the great city of New Orleans; and to receive handsome gifts of fruit and flowers for the captain, upon whose kindness the planters leaned for the luxuries of the outside world.

Late in December Miss Varina Howell arrived at the

"Diamond Place," the plantation of Mrs. David McCaleb, sister to the Davis brothers, fourteen miles north of "The Hurricane," near Vicksburg.

At seventeen Miss Varina was a fully developed woman, well-educated, and trained to the responsibilities of her station in life. Her family had been quickly absorbed into the Southern scene, although they kept some of their Yankee traits: the daughters were taught how to cook and do housework—knowledge that was not likely to endear her to the ladies of Virginia should she ever be brought amongst them. She was very handsome and very healthy: her dark hair, dark eyes, and dark skin glowed with youthful vitality, and her full upper lip gave to a haughty bearing a slight expression of cruelty, a trait which she did not have.

After she had been at Mrs. McCaleb's plantation only a few days, a handsome and handsomely mounted horseman rode up, and dismounting gave her a message. He was, he said, on his way to a political meeting in Vicksburg. A few days later Miss Varina wrote to her mother:

Today Uncle Joe sent, by his younger brother (did you know he had one?), an urgent invitation to me to go at once to "The Hurricane." I do not know whether this Mr. Jefferson Davis is young or old. He looks both at times; but I believe he is old, for from what I hear he is only two years younger than you are. [He was thirty-six.] He impresses me as a remarkable kind of man, but of uncertain temper, and has a way of taking for granted that everybody agrees with him when he expresses an opinion, which offends me; yet he is most agreeable and has a peculiarly sweet voice and a winning manner of asserting himself. The fact is, he is the kind of person I should expect to rescue one from a mad dog at any risk, but to insist upon

a stoical indifference to the fright afterward. I do not think I shall ever like him as I do his brother Joe. Would you believe it, he is refined and cultivated, and yet he is a Democrat!

She called these words her first impressions, but they remain the most penetrating analysis that the character of Jefferson Davis ever received. She was, indeed, a remarkable girl, but it is doubtful if ever again she would have the detachment to look at him so coldly; she was to see him again and again. For, the next day, Miss Mary Bradford, a niece of the Davises, rode up with a manservant leading a horse for her to ride, and her laces and perfumes and flounces and hats being stowed in a carriage, they set off "all in the blue unclouded weather" of a Southern January "over the rustling leaves through the thick trees to 'The Hurricane.'"

The evenings passed: the brothers discussed, but so complete was their agreement that they seldom argued their politics. Poems were recited, and there were readings from historians. When the brothers were tired, when Jefferson's eyes felt strained, Miss Varina read to the company, and she translated with perfect accuracy the Latin quotations in the texts. In the lightest talk there was a certain elevation of tone, a formal recognition of the difficulty of expression even under the most favorable circumstances, which permitted the speaker to take his time and to do his best. The great Southern art of conversation—which left no county records and is lost to the documentary historian—was, in the end, the medium through which the people profoundly understood one another, and were made civilized. Contrasted with this, the conversation of modern Americans is a collection of primitive signs, by means of which even educated people ex-

press only a sense of animal existence . . . broken sentences . . . half phrases . . . repetitions. . . .

Every day Miss Varina, being a staunch Whig, wore her "sub-Treasury brooch." This emblem was a small cameo upon which was carved a watch-dog, a bloodhound, crouching by a great strong-box, heavily locked. The symbolism seems to have got mixed; for Whig children were told that Martin Van Buren, the present leader of the Jackson "rabble," wished to turn the dog loose on their families. Or perhaps it meant that vested interest chained down the passions of the mob. Andrew Jackson had broken the National Banks and ruined many rich families North and South: except in the minds of a few Southern leaders the political cleavage in the 'forties was not sectional—it was the usual cleavage between the poor and the rich.

One day Miss Varina appeared without her brooch, and Jefferson Davis knew that he had won: it was her way of telling him that she had put aside her family prejudices. These were strong but not insurmountable, for Mr. Howell, upon whose consent the engagement depended, was, as one writer calls him, the "complete father," and the question of party was waived because Mr. Jefferson Davis was a cultivated and a very promising man. The lady had been quickly won, for Davis left "The Hurricane" in January—a few weeks after Miss Varina had arrived—an engaged man. It was 1844. In February of the next year, on the 26th, they were married, and the Whig ladies of Natchez shook their heads: the bride's trousseau was simple and the ceremony almost plain—a concession to a simple, plain, and Democratic man.

Varina Howell Davis

Portrait by Charles Cromwell Ingham, here reproduced for the first time, by courtesy of the owner, Mr. George H. Earle, 3rd, of Haverford, Pa.

8

The young couple went to live at "Brierfield." It was a simple, rambling one-story frame house with a small portico in front and still smaller porticos detached, on the two wings. Davis had planned the house and, with the help of James Pemberton, built it. The front and rear doors were six feet wide; Mrs. Davis said that opening one of them was like opening the side of the house. By some miscalculation the windows were breast-high. It was far more typical of the plantation régime than the large classical stucco houses that have come down in popular tradition.

The Jefferson Davises were good planters, but they were not typical planters; though their system had all the virtues and none of the vices of the slavery régime. For, even before their marriage, Jefferson Davis had actively entered politics, and they were not, from now on, to be much at home again.

In 1843 he had run for the state legislature in his district, which was overwhelmingly Whig; he knew that he had no chance to win, but the Whigs defeated him only by withdrawing one candidate and concentrating their vote upon the other. The successful candidate was Seargent S. Prentiss, the most famous orator in the South before the rise of William Lowndes Yancey. Against him, Davis held his own, and attracted attention. The next year, 1844, while he was courting Miss Howell, he "stumped" the whole state as an elector for James K. Polk. In 1845 he was elected to Congress as Representative at large.

His career in Congress was cut short by the Mexican War, in which he played a conspicuous and, as it turned out, an unfortunate part. He had supported Polk's war policy in the

House as an important phase of the Southern impulse to expand; while Calhoun, almost alone of the Southern leaders, opposed it. Calhoun was justified by events, for the territory acquired from Mexico reopened the slavery issue: Calhoun had foreseen that the North would let it be admitted only as free soil. But the majority of Southern politicians, believing that the Constitution would protect them, greeted the war with joy, for it was by no means impossible that all of Mexico should fall into their hands and, as territory south of the Missouri Compromise line, enter the Union as an expansion of the "slave-empire." Had it not been for a diplomatic blunder in the later negotiations for peace—a blunder that Polk could not rectify without exposing the Southern hand—Mexico would undoubtedly have become a part of the United States.

Davis resigned his seat in the House and raised a volunteer regiment later famous as the "Mississippi Rifles." Colonel Davis was a strict disciplinarian, and he had advanced ideas about war. He armed his men with a new model of rifle which he preferred to the old musket that the War Department clung to. His men became the crack volunteer organization of Zachary Taylor's army, which they joined in September, 1846. There was fighting at Monterey in which Davis took part, and he did more than any other of Taylor's subordinates to win the battle of Buena Vista. The Mexican cavalry charged up a ravine on the flank of the Mississippi Rifles, but Davis threw his men round the end of the ravine, and poured a converging fire upon the Mexicans that broke the charge. The battle was won. Colonel Davis, wounded in the foot, went home on crutches, the hero of the hour. The mob cheered him in New Orleans, and he was eulogized by the great Prentiss. He had always thought of himself as a soldier;

in a sense he had reached the zenith of his career. He seems to have believed the applause.

Whether he was a great soldier no one can decide, but the popular belief that he was became one of the instruments of his fate. He had received an education that he had not earned: he had set up as a planter by another man's labor: and now, without great political experience, he was sent to the United States Senate, in 1847, in recognition of his military prowess. His career was now resembling the economy of the people who lived by taking in one another's washing. His war record advanced him in politics and his political record, in 1861, justified his election to the Southern Presidency when the need of military talent seemed urgent. Not even the devils in hell, who have much knowledge of frailty, could have withstood the vain conclusion that so rapid and so unearned a rise to leadership was due to personal merit so great that men could not fail to recognize it. It is probable that Davis secretly took this view, for when people disagreed with him he felt personally insulted. A man who had served a full political apprenticeship could never had fallen into such an error. But the studious, neurotic egoist, poring over his books, had that pride of intellect that feeds on the smallness of its affairs with men. He could not manage men, and he was too great a character to let men manage him: that is the tragedy of his career.

However, he was occasionally duped. He had been in the Senate only a year when he became the most eloquent defender of Southern rights—the obvious successor to Calhoun; and when the Compromise of 1850, framed by Henry Clay, had been ratified by popular vote in Mississippi, he did not hesitate to resign from the Senate to run for Governor on the anti-Compromise ticket—an act of self-sacrifice that, for a time, seemed to end his

political career; for he was defeated. But Pierce called him to his Cabinet, as Secretary of War, in 1852. In 1854 the Kansas-Nebraska issue of "squatter sovereignty" held the political stage, and Douglas duped Davis into its support. Davis thus helped to bring on the South the disastrous experiment of trying to hold its own in the territories; the failure of this effort may be said to be the direct cause of the Civil War.

Jefferson Davis was probably the best Secretary of War the United States ever had; he has certainly had no superior. But the value of his experience in that office was doubtful. He became a slave to routine, in a time of peace, when routine brought success; routine made him a bureaucrat. He dominated a mediocre administration, and told Pierce to do everything but say his prayers. He enlarged the United States Army; he pushed on the work of completing the Capitol. But all the time he was using his power in the Cabinet for other and more far-reaching ends.

His greatest aim was Southern expansion into Mexico or Cuba or Central America. He consistently supported the filibustering in Cuba and Nicaragua, and he might have gained Cuba if he had known more about diplomacy. But the Ostend Manifesto, issued by John Y. Mason, Pierre Soulé, and James Buchanan in 1854, announced that the United States would get Cuba by hook or crook; Europe, preferring the picking of pockets to open highway robbery, was "shocked"; and the plan failed. Another plan almost succeeded. Davis had James Gadsden appointed to buy the southern ends of New Mexico and Arizona. The land was worthless—to everybody but Davis, who intended to use it as part of the route of a transcontinental railroad connecting California with the South by way of Vicksburg. The scheme was bound to fail. Douglas was planning a railroad that

would run westward from Chicago, and he contrived to defeat the Southern scheme till the war began, when it had no chance of success.

Only the extremists like Yancey and Rhett knew that the South could expand no farther, but Davis, after 1850, was definitely on the side of maintaining the rights of the South inside the Union. When the Wilmot Proviso, prohibiting slavery in the territory snatched from Mexico, had been put aside by the Compromise of 1850, he took heart; and he was optimistic after the Dred Scott Decision, in which Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney laid down that the Missouri Compromise had been unconstitutional and that slaves could be held in territories north and south. The South was now apparently at the height of its power, but the power was weak because it lay in the letter of the law, which the North would no longer stand by. Davis, the constitutional pedant, could not see this, and he never understood the political reality behind the political law. Every breakdown of political theory gave him a shock, and this was mostly what he received from the election of a sectional President, Abraham Lincoln, on the 6th of November, 1860. He no longer had the capacity to learn.

9

After the farewell to the Senate, Mr. Davis lingered vainly in Washington in the hope that the threats of his arrest would be carried out, and the right of secession tested by law. He then started for Jackson, Mississippi, making speeches on the way in southwestern Virginia, northern Georgia, and Tennessee. At Jackson he remained a week, where, as head of the Mississippi army, he set about procuring guns, clothing, ammunition. No

one believed that there would be war. General Davis said to Governor Pettus: "The limit of our purchases [of arms] should be our power to pay. We shall need all and many more than we can get, I fear."

The Governor replied: "General, you overrate the risk."

When Davis left Jackson for "Brierfield" he had the position that he coveted above all others—the highest military rank in the state; the position for which he thought himself best fitted. In this contented frame of mind he had spent a few days at "Brierfield" "repairing his fences," when a messenger arrived with a telegram. Mr. and Mrs. Davis were out in the yard cutting a rosebush. Mr. Davis read the message. There was a painful silence. He looked as if some calamity had fallen upon him. Then he read the message to his wife:

Montgomery, Ala., February 9, 1861.

Hon. Jefferson Davis, Jackson.

Sir: We are directed to inform you that you are this day unanimously elected President of the Provisional Government of the Confederate States of America, and to request you to come to Montgomery immediately. We send also a special messenger. Do not wait for him.

R. Toombs,
R. Barnwell Rhett,
Jackson Morton.

He hurriedly packed, made a speech to the Negroes, and left for Montgomery the next day.

CHAPTER IV

THE MAKING OF A NATION

I

THE President-elect, going a roundabout way, took more than a week for the journey from "Brierfield" to Montgomery. All along the route, at every station, crowds gathered, and his speeches—he made more than twenty—raised popular excitement to the highest pitch. Everywhere but in Tennessee, where secession so far had been coldly received, the President was greeted by day with the firing of salutes and with bonfires by night. There could be no doubt of the right of a sovereign state to secede, and not one man in a hundred believed there was trouble to come. But Davis invariably told them to prepare for a long, fierce war. It was not for this warning, however, that he was now the man of the hour: it was rather because he was an unfamiliar, almost new figure to the people, surrounded by an atmosphere of immense potentiality. His dignified, noble bearing, the suavity of his manner, the eloquent melodiousness of his voice ingratiated him with a public of whom he had as yet asked nothing, a people that he had put to no trial; his very austerity heightened his mystery; and by one of those seizures of emotion that takes the crowd in a crisis he was raised so high that it would be hard for him to reach down to the people again. Once more fate had put him in a place that he

had not won from the people. In the next four years he would suppose that the Constitution was the source of his power, and he would impatiently appeal to it, but not to the people themselves.

He had arrived in Montgomery on February 16th. On the 17th he rested from the trip, and received a few friends. On the 18th he was inaugurated. The ceremonies were simple but impressive and, as proof of the revolutionists' orthodoxy, a miniature imitation of a Washington inaugural.

The inauguration had some of the features of a politicians' love-feast, but the brotherly love was delusive, for it rested upon untried assumptions on both sides. If the fire-eating planters had permitted the conservatives to hobble their aggressive power with a cumbrous constitutional machine, they yet believed this to be only a formal concession that they would override with personal influence. But in this they ignored their man: Davis would not let himself be saddled and bridled by any man. He, in his turn, being a poor politician, appears to have had no sense of the powerful opposition concealed behind the bland, unruffled faces of the radicals.

At one o'clock, the President-elect arrived with his escort at the Senate hall of the Alabama capitol. At his right walked the amazing homunculus, Vice-President-elect Stephens, who, like the dwarf Rumpelstiltskin in the fairy tale, would soon find that his government was inspired by the devil. At his left, supporting him in the grand style on his arm, walked the Honorable Robert Barnwell Rhett, of South Carolina. Had Davis but known it, he was at that moment between the upper and the nether millstone: the two men were to hound him unmercifully—the one, because he seemed to take too much power from the people to

prosecute the war; the other, because he carried the war on too feebly. But the suave Rhett was the most astonishing apparition of all.

It is possible that Rhett, rightly and bitterly disappointed at his failure of the Presidency, alone saw the irony of his position; but, as one writer has said, he "bore himself with the *savoir faire* of a great gentleman." The small procession was received at the Chair by Howell Cobb, and upon motion of Mr. Chilton of Alabama the Congress escorted Mr. Davis and Mr. Stephens to the portico of the Capitol, where the inauguration began. Mr. Cobb administered the oath of office, and the President delivered his address.

The speech was in no wise remarkable, except for one thing: it foreshadowed the passive, defensive policy that the Davis government maintained throughout the war. Reaffirming the legal and constitutional right of the South to withdraw peacefully from the Union, Davis argued, with a certain show of plausibility, that the North could have no economic interest in bringing the South back, and that the interest of Europe lay in preserving peace so that cotton could flow undisturbed into the European mills. The technical rightness of the South and the theoretical rightness of Davis's view of the economic situation were both beside the point; but it is clear that he made of these fantasies a bed of Procrustes upon which, he thought, all difficulties would have to lie. There were incalculable forces soon to be let loose—the seemingly irrational nationalism of the West and the refusal of the English mill-workers to approve of slavery even under starvation—these were too complex for Davis's mind, and he could only meet them with rhetoric and surprise. In the midst of the unreality of the inaugural address he inserted a plea for

a large army, to be put immediately upon a war footing. He did see that war was coming, but beyond this he did not know what to do. He was worried.

Two days after the inauguration he wrote to his wife, who was still at "Brierfield":

> I was inaugurated on Monday. . . . The audience was large and brilliant. Upon my weary heart was showered smiles, plaudits, and flowers; but beyond them, I saw troubles and thorns innumerable. . . . We are without machinery, without means, and threatened by a powerful opposition; but I do not despond, and will not shrink from the task imposed upon me. . . . Here I am interrupted by the Secretary of the Congress. . . . This is a gay and handsome town of some eight thousand inhabitants. . . . As soon as I can call an hour my own, I will look for a house and write you more fully. . . .

The "troubles and thorns innumerable" were already growing up about him, but neither now nor later did he shrink from them; his faults did not include a lack of courage.

The first problem that confronted him was the creation of an administration, and in this he exhibited some of the limitations of a conventional and routine mind. His one experience in administration had been in Pierce's Cabinet, but there was a vast difference between the affairs of a single bureau in time of peace and the harrowing necessities of a whole government, new and uncertain of itself, faced with war. His years in the Senate, where skilful debate could rule supreme, had given him little of use to his needs. Nor was his thinking in the wider sense original enough to prompt him to fresh and energetic action in an almost unprecedented crisis. There is no evidence that Davis—or any of the Southern statesmen after Calhoun—understood the his-

torical meaning of the sectional struggle. Southerners believed that they stood for "Christianity and Civilization" and, seen in the light of the main traditions of Europe, the assertion was literally true: theirs was the last stand, they were the forlorn hope, of conservative Fundamentalist Christianity and of civilization, based on agrarian, class rule, in the European sense. Europe was already being Americanized—which means Northernized, industrialized—and the South by 1850 was more European than Europe. The slogan, "Christianity and Civilization," as Southerners used it, meant in the end that they were superior to Northerners—which was another question altogether. The issue was class rule and religion *versus* democracy and science.

Davis, to the end of his life, believed that men would improve under the joint influence of Christianity and science, and he had no suspicion that he was ever the leader of a profoundly antiscientific society. He was, like his contemporaries, a debating politician, not a philosopher. The anomaly of his position in history never struck him. Routine political habits were consequently to become the bugbear of his life.

The choice of his Cabinet was the product of political habit. Instead of getting the best men available he followed the custom of apportioning out the offices evenly among the States, and in order to bind them together he carried the procedure further than it had ever been carried before. There was no party boldly grabbing the spoils; every state, he supposed, had to get its share, and it got it. Davis's political blindness was never darker than in the formation of his Cabinet. He seems honestly to have thought that he was conciliating all parties with his even division of the honors. What he actually did was to eliminate from his govern-

ment the powerful radicals and to antagonize them. He evidently did not foresee this, for all of his well-meant efforts were incredibly naïve. But conciliation of the states was the *idée fixe* of the Montgomery political atmosphere from the day the Convention met, and Davis could not escape it.

Since South Carolina had led the secession movement, it appeared urgent to give that troublesome state all the honor it was due. For this reason alone the portfolio of state would not have been too great a reward, and Davis accordingly offered it to Robert Barnwell. At this distance it seems plausible to suppose that the South Carolinians decided, since Rhett had been put aside, not to have anything to do with the Davis régime, for Barnwell turned down the offer. However, he asked for the Secretaryship of the Treasury, not for himself but for Christopher G. Memminger, an unimaginative little man who by industry and conservatism had risen from a Charleston orphanage to local prominence. What Davis failed to see was that neither Barnwell nor Memminger belonged to the Rhett faction; they were both "moderates." Memminger was generally unknown and disliked where he was known.

Toombs was again disappointed, for next to the Presidency he desired the Treasury, and it was the position above all others that he was best fitted for. In a region where economists were few, Toombs was an economist and a good one, and he would have seen that the finances of the Confederacy were not those of a local bank; he would have taken chances. But both he and Georgia had to have something; so he was juggled into the State Department. Toombs's ability was so various that he would have made a good Secretary of State had Davis let him alone; but Davis was master of them all; and the belief of Toombs and

Rhett that they would control the foreign policy quickly went up in smoke.

There was Yancey who, along with Alabama, deserved his share; but he was a difficult problem. He was a lawyer, an orator, and agitator; not an administrator. So he was offered the post of Attorney General, the least important in the Cabinet; he promptly rejected it. But Yancey, like Barnwell, had his man. He proposed Leroy Pope Walker for Secretary of War. Now Davis, a trained soldier himself, knew that war should be administered by a man who has better qualifications than a heart in the right place; he had in mind Braxton Bragg for the job; but so great was his desire to please, so anxious was he not to hurt anybody's feelings, that he discarded Bragg, and gave the place to Walker. The result was that Davis became Secretary of War himself—probably his intention all along. Three days after his inauguration he began writing detailed instructions, about caps and friction primers and rifling machines, to purchasing agents, adding that the contracts would be signed by the Secretary of War! It is no wonder that the Cabinet complained that they were mere office boys. Davis was qualified to give advice in war; but the only Department that was not interfered with was the Treasury, the one that needed interference most.

There was one that did not object to interference: that was the Department that Judah P. Benjamin happened to be occupying. First, he was Attorney General—that post turned out to be Louisiana's share—which Benjamin, willing to abide his time, was alone willing to accept. When Walker gave up the War Department for lack of occupation, Benjamin was promoted. He was not a bad Secretary of War, but the military reverses during his régime discredited him, and his scalp was demanded. Davis

acceded to the popular will by again promoting him, this time to Secretary of State! Benjamin's talent was diplomacy, but in 1862 the chances of Confederate success in that field depended upon miracles. Benjamin soon learned that the plain-speaking of Yancey and Toombs and Rhett offended a President who would brook no open opposition, and he tempered the wind to the sensitivity of the shorn lamb, and became, as all flatterers become, indispensable. He is prominent in Confederate history because he symbolizes the President's weaker self.

The one Cabinet appointment that was unequivocally good was that of Stephen R. Mallory, of Florida, to the Navy Department. The success of the appointment was accidental; Mallory had been Chairman of the Navy Committee in the United States Senate; and he was appointed because Florida had to have "something." The appointment, besides, was honorary; Davis at first did not plan to have a Navy; but when the Federal blockade made one necessary, Mallory gathered about him the best talent in the land. The Confederate Navy, created out of nothing, was the marvel of the world: it demonstrated for the first time the power of iron-clad vessels; it used the first under-water torpedo; and it launched the first even partly successful submarine. One other Cabinet appointment was good. John H. Reagan, of Texas, whose state early in March became the seventh in the Confederacy, was Postmaster General: he did all there was to do with a difficult but unimportant office. Mallory and Reagan were the only original appointments to keep their offices throughout the war.

The Davis family, when Mrs. Davis and the children had arrived, went to live in a plain, two-story frame house where Mrs. Davis, whose skill at political management exceeded her hus-

band's, received visitors and occasionally held a "levée." Davis was already too overworked to unbend to the politicians, but when he was not harried by care he could be charming; at any rate, he often laughed at the blusterers who shouted that the Yankees would not fight. He rose early, working at home until breakfast; went to his office; returned to work again, frequently until midnight. The Confederate offices were in a large box-like, ugly red brick building situated on a corner. No attempt had been made to give it the outward signs of majesty and power. The inside walls were whitewashed. Important offices were designated with hand-written sheets of paper pasted on doors. The President's office, upstairs, stood in the center of a quadrangular gallery, and the sheet of paper on his door simply said "The President." There was always a mountain of papers on his desk, but he was accessible to everybody. Officials came in without a word; strangers required the intercession of an usher; no one was refused an audience. Democracy reigned supreme.

A British newspaper correspondent saw him at this period and wrote a vivid description:

> . . . he did not impress me as favorably as I had expected, though he is certainly a very different looking man from Mr. Lincoln. He is like a gentleman—has a slight, light figure, little exceeding middle height, and holds himself erect and straight. He was dressed in a rustic suit of slate-colored stuff, with a black silk handkerchief round his neck; his manner is plain and rather reserved and drastic; his head is well-formed, with a fine, full forehead, square and high . . . and eyes deep-set, large and full—one seems nearly blind, and is partly covered with a film. . . . Wonderful to relate, he does not chew. . . . The expression of his face is anxious, and he has a very haggard,

care-worn, and pain-drawn look, though no trace of anything but the utmost confidence. . . .

He talked confidently, but by the end of six weeks—by the first of April—he had become exceedingly anxious. Opposition had so grown that Congress was holding secret sessions, so that the public could not object to his use of power. Toombs and Rhett by this time had been thwarted in their foreign policy; Memminger had raised not a cent; and the first purchasing agent of the government was sent abroad to buy only ten thousand stand of arms.

2

Congress itself had wasted time making speeches, and though Davis showed a strong will, his hand was weak because he knew not what to do. The most urgent problem of the new nation was its relation to other countries including the United States. The stand of the Washington government would be largely decided by the attitude of the European powers, for Europe's recognition of the new government would put it immediately upon its feet. From the outset President Davis knew this: up to 1864, when he was finally convinced that "we have no friends abroad," he depended upon European recognition for the solution of his difficulties: how, in the light of his own estimate of Europe, as this was revealed in the instructions to his emissaries, he could have expected aid from abroad, is one of those mysteries of human character that we shall never see through.

Mr. Yancey, as we have seen, had not yet been disposed of by the government; so he was selected to head a commission to Europe. He was not fitted by nature or training for the task; he

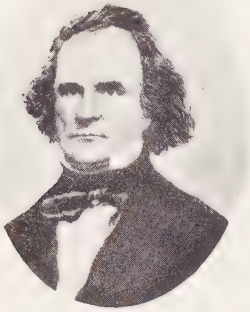
was impetuous and proud, and his experience was that of a provincial statesman. Bargaining and humility, and patience before rebuff, were necessary to the success of the mission, and because Benjamin had these diplomatic assets, he would have been the best man for the place. There was talent in the Confederacy, but it was never properly used.

Mr. Rhett, as Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, reported a bill to the Congress providing for the European mission; but because the power of making treaties rested with the President, Mr. Rhett could not presume to give to Mr. Yancey his instructions. But Rhett and Toombs had agreed upon what should be done: Yancey's commission should have full power to make treaties, and offer overwhelming commercial inducements to England and France—nominal *ad valorem* duties on imports to the Confederacy, no tonnage duties, free navigation between Confederate ports. These privileges in exchange for recognition and alliance. This was the position of the fire-eaters; for such an offer, if accepted, would have amounted to dependency upon Europe for twenty years; the extremists, those who felt most deeply the separate nationality of the South, preferred vassalage to indefinite exploitation, and ultimate extinction, at the hands of the North.

Just after Mr. Yancey had received his instructions—March 16, 1861—he went to see Mr. Rhett, with whom he agreed on the necessity of commercial treaties. But he surprised Rhett by saying that his instructions gave him no power to make them. "Then," said Rhett, "if you will take my advice, as your friend, do not accept the appointment. For if you have nothing to propose and nothing to treat about, you must necessarily fail. Demand of the President the powers essential to your mission or stay at home."

The instructions had been written by Toombs as Secretary of State, at the President's direction, in a colorless lucidity that seems like irony. The letter was long, very full—of nothing. In the end it said two things, which were different ways of saying that Cotton was King. The North, Toombs said, would, in case of war, be cut off from the profit on manufactures sold to the South, and from the exchange of the South's raw materials; therefore "we have no unusual reasons to fear war." And then, Cotton being King, all that was necessary to bring Europe to the South's feet was a "delicate allusion to the probability" that the cotton supply would be cut off. It has been said that Rhett shared this delusion, but it is doubtful. The delusion took no account of the fact that a great part if not most of the cotton crop of 1860 had been shipped to Europe, nor of the fact that in 1861 England had so much raw cotton on hand that even in 1862 considerable quantities were sold back to American mills. When the Commission of Yancey, Rost, and Mann went abroad, hostilities had not begun: how Davis hoped to coerce Europe with a situation that had not yet come about, it is hard to see. Commercial treaties alone would have succeeded. When Yancey had returned early in 1862, he said to Rhett: "You were right, sir, I went on a fool's errand."

Possibly it was sheer economic ignorance that prompted Davis to such a futile policy, or possibly he really believed that Europe would be impressed morally by the Southern case against the usurpations of the North. All of Davis's thought ran on a plane considerably higher than the reality of human conduct, and it is certain that he would have been moved by a vindication of abstract principle anywhere. He was very much the saint in politics. While the fire-eaters were motivated by a single and pow-



JOHN SLIDELL

W. L. YANCEY

JAMES M. MASON

STEPHEN R. MALLORY

ROBERT TOOMBS

Leaders of the South

erful desire to be rid of the United States at any price, and were thus not so much vindicating an idea as asserting a desire, Davis was always the American standing for the *principle* of local self-government. He would not sell out to Europe; he would not let Europe get a stranglehold on any part of *America;* for the South was undoubtedly still America to him. Rhett's distrust of Davis, from Rhett's viewpoint, was justified. Davis's early training had kept him from being moulded into a typical Lower Southerner; and although he fiercely insisted that the separation of the states was eternal, this was mostly the position of stubborn pride. Mrs. Davis testifies that up to the fall of Sumter his whole thought—certainly his unconscious thought—was bent upon reconciliation and reunion. It is a curious fact that the Americanism of the opposing White Houses was equally intense, though of different kinds.

The finances of the Confederacy were based upon the kingship of cotton, but the government evidently expected the monarch to act from sheer *noblesse:* he was never offered a bribe. Stephens urged the immediate export of 2,000,000 bales of cotton to establish a secured credit abroad of about $500,000,000; it was a good idea; but the 2,000,000 bales were not available (many had already been shipped), and there were no ships to carry them in. Such, at least, was the plausible argument of Memminger. There was a large fleet of steamers that the South might have bought, but they were dismantled, and there was no way to fit them out. Still, the possibilities of getting a sound money were not exhausted. The remaining cotton of 1860 and the whole crop of 1861 could have been bought up as collateral for a foreign loan, and shipped in small lots or held till after the war. This would have saddled the Confederacy with a huge debt, and Mr. Mem-

minger, straining at the gnat of bold economy, later swallowed the camel of timid bankruptcy and defeat. He let the cotton alone, and issued an unsecured currency, which at first bought gold at par; but because its value depended upon the quicksand of public opinion as to the Confederate morale at different times, it was worth no more in 1864 than the paper it was printed on. Money backed by cotton would have been superior to circumstance. Memminger's way of coercing Europe to intervene by putting his cotton majesty on a pedestal, instead of degrading him to the marketplace, was, undoubtedly, the easiest way. However, it assumed that the unbought cotton, for an indefinite period (Davis predicted a long war), would virtuously stay where it was put.

Three things happened to it. It was sold by Southerners to Union merchants; often this was done under pressure of starvation, but oftener by profiteers who soon made up a new class of "cotton snobs." Or it was confiscated by the Union armies when they overran the cotton belt. Or it was destroyed by Confederate garrisons, retreating before the superior numbers of the enemy. To protect cotton that was eventually to be lost without having done the government any good, large detached bodies of troops were scattered about the Confederacy, and the main armies weakened.

Nevertheless, the feeble foreign policy and the shortsighted economy cannot be charged to Davis as positive blunders; a few men rose above those errors, but not all; they were prevailing superstitions and Davis was only one of their victims. But they were far-reaching. In spite of the mistakes of leaders, of the dissension among the people, of the lack of grand strategy in the field, the Confederacy came within a hair of success; its entire

history is a mosaic of tremendous *ifs*. *If* any one set of unfavorable circumstances had been warded off, the South would doubtless have won. The failure to secure real money and to bribe the good offices of Europe set the Confederacy, at the outset, all awry; it was a bad start from which it never recovered.

3

Davis's masterful personality early in March had triumphed over the Lower Southern politicians, and affairs were everywhere, not only in the Confederate government, in the hands of those who not only hoped but believed that "peaceful councils would prevail." A few weeks before, the granddaughter of ex-President John Tyler had raised a Confederate flag over the Montgomery Capitol; but the old gentleman himself, backed by Senator Crittenden, whose compromises had been refused in December, was heading a peace convention in Virginia. Three days before Davis was inaugurated, the Confederate Congress had provided for a peace commission to be sent to Washington to treat of all difficulties arising out of the changed relation of the States. Davis appointed Martin J. Crawford of Georgia, A. B. Roman of Louisiana, and John Forsyth of Alabama. Crawford arrived in Washington four days before Buchanan went out of office, and reminded the demoralized President that he had promised to receive accredited emissaries from the new government. Buchanan vaguely remembered the promise, but delayed; he saw himself burning in effigy all over the Northern states.

Two weeks went by; Lincoln had been inaugurated; and Seward, the new Secretary of State, refused official reception to the Southern emissaries. However, through John A. Campbell of

Alabama, a justice of the Supreme Court and a last-minute Unionist, he had unofficial intercourse with the Confederates, and he constantly promised that Fort Sumter would be evacuated. There is reason to believe that Seward's representations were sincere; he probably had peace ideas of his own that he held in contempt of what he thought was the weak policy of Lincoln; and he presumed to give promises that Lincoln knew nothing of. But Lincoln, a masterly politician, was playing for time, waiting for an opportunity to put the seceded states popularly in the wrong. The opportunity quickly came.

While the Confederates were being deceived by Seward, Lincoln was preparing—after some hesitation—to send an expedition to Charleston to reinforce Major Anderson in Fort Sumter. The preparations were secret; the attitude of the Federal government towards the South Carolina and the Confederate governments was an ingenious tissue of lies; and if these initial lies saved the Union, the moral, for those who like a moral, is that the end justified the means. Lincoln was now in a position to make Fort Sumter a test case: would the Confederates tamely give up to the Federal government property in a Southern port that they claimed as their own—or would they seize the property by force, and thus give Lincoln the chance to say that the Southerners had shed the first blood?

This was too easy, and the Confederates were to blame for their delay. Other property had been seized; other shots fired. If Fort Sumter had been seized earlier, Lincoln would have been compelled to look farther than the firing on the United States flag as an excuse to invade the Southern states. His sole excuse would have been the questionable legal obligation to bring the states back into the Union, and in this he would have gained

scant support at the North; the attitude there was unwarlike and in favor of "letting the erring sisters go." Could he, somehow, get the Southerners to fire on the American flag? If so, he would have a popular, emotional appeal to make to the Northern people.

The Montgomery government was in a tight place: it had no desire to make war, and, even if it had, the time had passed to begin it; Lincoln had been established and had got the situation in hand. The anxiety of the Confederate government to prove that it had no aggressive intentions had counseled delay, and delay was about to precipitate them into what would seem to be aggression in the eyes of the world.

On April 6th Lincoln signed the order for the expedition to Fort Sumter. On the 7th Judge Campbell asked Seward the meaning of the alarm over the preparations of the fleet; Seward replied, "Faith as to Sumter fully kept—wait and see." The next day Campbell read in a newspaper that "an authorized messenger from President Lincoln had informed Governor Pickens and General Beauregard that provisions will be sent to Fort Sumter —peaceably, or otherwise by force."

In Montgomery Toombs advised the Cabinet to delay; the time for a bold step, in his opinion, had passed. The only thing to be gained by taking Sumter was a technical vindication of State Rights—a slight point beside the advantage of waiting till Lincoln was forced into the first overt act. But Toombs's record as a secessionist was well known, while Davis's was more doubtful; so President Davis sent to Beauregard, commanding at Charleston, through the Secretary of War, the following order:

If you have no doubt as to the authorized character of the agent who communicated to you the intention of the Washington Govern-

ment to supply Fort Sumter by force, you will at once demand its evacuation, and, if this is refused, proceed in such manner as you may determine to reduce it.

This was all; but it permitted Lincoln to put the responsibility of starting the war upon the South.

On the 11th of April Beauregard demanded the surrender. Anderson refused, but said to the messengers that he would have to surrender on the 15th or starve. So Beauregard wisely did nothing that day. At midnight a harbor pilot brought news that a Federal vessel was standing off the harbor. Beauregard knew that the Federal relief squadron had come. After one o'clock he sent a new demand to Anderson, for the circumstances that would have forced the surrender would, within twenty-four hours, be removed. Anderson refused a second time. The aides, without reporting to Beauregard, left Sumter for Fort Johnson, where they gave the order to fire. . . .

Before dawn on the 12th the first gun broke the stillness of the harbor; others followed from the encircling forts, from the floating batteries. Fort Sumter lay quiet. At full daylight her guns answered. Mobs thronged the harbor front, cheering a good shot from either side. Small boats full of daring spectators went out into the harbor, under the very guns of the fort. All day the duel continued. At nightfall Sumter ceased her fire. But the Confederates kept on, and the shells flying in arcs over the harbor burst like skyrockets above the ghostly fort. At dawn of the 13th Major Anderson began firing back, but the walls of Sumter were crumbling; the Federal fleet outside the bar could not come to its relief; early in the afternoon he raised the white flag. Anderson and Beauregard exchanged high courtesies, and the sur-

rendered garrison, after saluting the Stars and Stripes, marched out with colors flying. Not a man had been killed in battle on either side.

4

The Southern public thought it was a great victory, and Charleston was delirious for days. But it was a political triumph for the North: Europe had no interest in the actual merit of the Southern case, and Sumter enabled Seward to tell England that the South had brought on the war. The day after the fall of Sumter the war party at the North clamored for action: where there had been one man in ten willing to coerce the seceded states, there were thousands, certainly a majority, eager to "defend the flag." Few Northern men understood the masterly game that Lincoln had played; for when Lincoln, on April 17th, called for 75,000 three-months' men to deal with "combinations too powerful" to be suppressed by the action of the courts, they rose as one man. It was all in vain that Davis pointed out the absurdity of the idea of "combinations" by means of which Lincoln made the Southern situation out as one of rebellion; it was too late to expect a populace to understand that the "combinations" were a whole people, that the courts themselves were a part of them, that the South had not rebelled against any authority that it recognized. Lincoln declared a blockade of every Southern port, from Virginia to Texas, but the South scorned it; it could not, of course, be made good.

Davis called for 100,000 men to serve for one year. He had a clearer view of the magnitude of the coming struggle than Lincoln had, but this view contained contradictions. He saw that the war would last longer than three months, but he took no vigorous

steps to arm the men. By the end of 1861 Confederate purchasing agents were more active than their Federal rivals; but in the early months Davis seems to have depended on seizing old arms scattered about in state or Federal arsenals. There were about 150,000, only 10,000 of which were modern weapons. There was little artillery, and no machinery to make it; the few cannon on hand were old, many of them coming down from the War of 1812. By taking the first step at Sumter, the Confederate government had to prepare for war under great disadvantages—that is, after hostilities began. Thus the initiative was lost. Toombs had favored delay, and now he urged aggressive action, but there was no way to take it. Davis's defensive attitude was due partly to lack of equipment, partly to his conception of the war. He hoped to gain moral prestige in Europe by the integrity of his defensive position, for already—astonishingly enough—he looked to Europe to end the war. It would have been better to do nothing before Sumter than after; for that display of fireworks gave Lincoln an immediate "war aim" that the populace could understand.

There was a great uprising in the South, too. Over three hundred thousand men answered the call to arms. The Southerner, bred to horseback riding and the use of firearms, was the finest military material in the world, incomparably better than the town-reared clerks and mechanics of the North. But the Davis government was not in a position to use the enthusiasm of the Southern masses; not all of the 100,000 called for were accepted; there were no materials of war.

On the day, April 17th, Lincoln called for 75,000 men, Virginia at last seceded, and the Peace Convention crashed against the stone wall that it had not been able to see. In a few weeks

the second group of states, following Virginia's stand against coercion of the cotton states, left the Union—North Carolina, Arkansas, and Tennessee. The hesitation of Virginia had lost to the Confederacy the crucial border states of Maryland, Kentucky, possibly Missouri. Lincoln threatened to arrest the Maryland legislature if it voted secession; he convinced the Kentuckians that the war was not against slavery, but for the Union, and they were won; and through the energy and skill of Frank P. Blair, Jr., he was able to hold Missouri. If Virginia had acted sooner, Lincoln might not have had time to deal with the other border states. Maryland in the Confederacy would have meant the loss of Washington to the North: Kentucky would probably have brought Missouri with it, and possibly southern Illinois and the lower counties of southern Indiana. The loss of these states did not directly defeat the Confederacy. But the circumstance was decisive; with them the Confederacy would have won. Lincoln knew this; he said: "I think to lose Kentucky is very nearly to lose all." So he wheedled and coaxed. The Southern politicians, using the King Cotton logic, threatened; they expected economic determinism to bring Kentucky and the West to their side; but they failed to see that the West had acquired interest in the East that it had lacked in 1850.

Virginia at once sent a delegation to Montgomery to make a treaty with the Confederacy, and its head, Robert M. T. Hunter, became, until the fall of 1864, one of Davis's staunchest friends. How much Hunter had to do with one of the chief mistakes of the Southern politicians is not known; but it was speedily made at this time.

The wives of the politicians were dissatisfied with the village atmosphere of Montgomery, and the politicians themselves, used

to the comforts of their trade, chafed in the restraint of the two hotels and the numerous "homes" that had taken them in. Congress resolved to hold its next session in Richmond. The President protested, but upon the invitation of Virginia, it was decided to move the whole government there. Virginia was no longer as powerful as any one of the great Lower Southern States, but she was still the "mother of States and Statesmen," and her prestige was tremendous. Besides, she had almost failed to secede, and, like Georgia, deserved the utmost consideration of the Confederate government.

Davis's protests were in vain. The removal of the capital to Richmond placed it on the frontier where it required the maximum of military protection, without any strategic advantage whatever. The strategic center of the Confederacy was the Mississippi Valley, and the capital should have remained there. For political reasons a large army was kept in Virginia; another in the west, for strategic purposes. Thus, the military power being divided, there was never a unified strategy on a grand scale. The East and the West fought separate wars. The somewhat factitious value of the Richmond Capitol blinded the government to the enormous and actual value of the Mississippi Valley.

Davis set out for Richmond late in May. His popularity was still high, and he was greeted everywhere on the way with overwhelming enthusiasm. He was still riding the wave of war emotion. In Virginia he was received with the honor due to a second Washington. Most of the governmental party put up at the Spotswood House. On the day of his arrival he "left his quarters at the Spotswood House and proceeded to the new Fair Grounds, where a large number of ladies and gentlemen . . . greeted him with the heartiest demonstrations of pleasure." He

said: "The country relies upon you. Upon you rest the hopes of our people; and I have only to say, my friends, that to the last breath of my life, I am wholly your own."

Davis was now at his best. At this early period, before the responsibilities of the war had borne heavily upon him, he was a star able to shine in the most brilliant society, and he shone. But the Virginians had their reservations. Who was Jefferson Davis? They had never heard of his grandfather, nor did they know the number of his slaves. The prejudice against Davis was, however, less personal than sectional. The Virginians were a self-sufficient people, provincial to their very eyes; backward-looking and contented to rest upon a mellow classicism that had followed the era of the great Virginia statesmen. They had no sympathy with the Lower Southern dream of a great empire, and there is no doubt that they looked upon the Lower Southerners as upstarts. Mrs. Davis was received none too warmly, and she said later that she got an English welcome—wary and cold, in spite of her official credentials. Before long the intrigues of the ladies were the spice of a somewhat meagre Richmond life. At first Mrs. Davis was "that western woman"; then she rose to "that coarse western woman"; and at last it was said that she was rude to a plainly dressed lady whom she had not recognized as Mrs. Robert E. Lee. Mrs. Davis was neither coarse nor rude; nor was there a more gracious and accomplished woman in Richmond. The antagonism went deeper than feminine social rivalry; it held the germ of a sectionalism within the South. It is certain that the Upper South would not have seceded without pressure from the Lower.

After about six weeks the Davises moved into the former residence of Dr. John Brockenbrough, a mansion at the end of East

Clay Street looking over the brow of a tall hill. The citizens wished to give them the house; Davis insisted upon paying his rent. The Confederate "White House" was surrounded by other mansions; but on the plain below stood the dingy houses of the poor people. Their sons formed a gang called the "Butcher cats," sworn to deadly hatred of the "Hill cats," who were the "gentlemen's sons." After a severe battle the President walked down the hill to make peace; he made a speech, calling the "Butcher cats" the future rulers of the country; one of them replied, "President, we like you, we don't want to hurt any of your boys, but we ain't *never* goin' to be friends with them Hill cats."

Every day the President rode out to the training camps north of the city. Sometimes a numerous staff accompanied him, but more often his sole aide was his private secretary, Mr. Burton Harrison, a Louisianian of Virginian descent whose perfect linen and perfect manner survived all the shocks of war. "Mr. Davis rode a beautiful gray horse. His worst enemy will allow that he is a consummate rider, graceful and easy in the saddle."

5

Troops were being rushed to Virginia from all parts of the South, and now the President had given over the finances to Mr. Memminger and had disposed of foreign affairs, he devoted his energies, which were enormous, to the organization of the army. The largest unit accepted was the regiment, to the disgust of the governors of states, who for political reasons wished to appoint their own brigadiers. Davis reserved the right to appoint the officers of higher rank, and because there was a great wealth

of trained soldiery in the South the Confederate army at the start was better commanded than the Federal, whose officers at first were mainly politicians. And yet the army, in view of the immense enthusiasm, was absurdly small. Davis would not accept organizations for short terms of services; at a glance this policy seems far-sighted, but the reason why he stood by it was undoubtedly the lack of any large plan for the conduct of the war. His policy was to stand indefinitely on the defensive, to be indefinitely ready for any move on the part of the North. The fire-eaters would certainly have thrown together as large an army as possible and attacked the North, staking all on one blow. Davis's policy was a kind of logical imitation of the political position of the South; the South was defending itself against aggression; and where would consistency be if she attacked and invaded the aggressor? This policy strongly resembles the policy of a later war President from the South. It was "watchful waiting"; but unlike Wilson, who was waiting for public opinion to support him, Davis waited because it was the safe thing to do. He might not, in this way, win immediately; and yet it was equally certain that he would not immediately lose. Besides, playing safe he would postpone the crisis, and something might turn up—perhaps the war party at the North would weaken, perhaps Europe would intervene.

Beyond the rapid concentration of an army in Virginia there was no positive military plan. A bold and enterprising leader—not merely a cautiously tenacious one—would have rushed the purchase of arms in the early months and pushed an army of 100,000 men against Washington by July, or advanced into the Northwest and cut the North in two. But Lincoln was gathering a force for the defense of Washington, and Davis, without a

positive strategy of his own, took the negative step of placing his forces where they would meet the Federal invaders whenever they chose to move. On a larger scale this became the Confederate strategy for the war.

At this time the governors of the states supported the Confederate government, and most of the state troops were mustered into the Confederate army. Officers who had resigned from the United States army were given corresponding rank in the Confederacy, and when the Congress provided for five full generals, Joseph E. Johnston of Virginia should have headed the list. Instead, the five generals were ranked as follows: Samuel Cooper, a New Yorker who had married into Virginia, was given, for some reason, the highest rank as adjutant-general, but, like Jack, "he was not very good and not very bad"—a harmless mediocrity; Albert Sidney Johnston, an able soldier and a truly noble man; Robert E. Lee, who had been offered the command of the Union forces, but was not otherwise much talked of; Joseph E. Johnston; and P. G. T. Beauregard, a fair soldier and the most distinguished rhetorician of the Confederate army. Joe Johnston attributed his failure to receive the highest rank to Davis's personal dislike, which did not exist, and he never forgave it. Nor was the President the man to deal lightly with a subordinate who questioned the motives of his authority. The quarrel, which was to outlast the Confederacy, had a paralyzing influence upon its career.

By the second week in July the Confederates had three small armies in the Virginian field. Their positions were strictly defensive. The largest force, under General Beauregard, occupied Fairfax County, to oppose a Union force under Irvin McDowell that was rapidly approaching 50,000 men; Beauregard had about

20,000. The Confederate flag, flying from Munson's Hill, was in plain view of Lincoln in the White House. The town of Alexandria, and Arlington Heights opposite Washington, were not occupied by Federal troops until late in May; the Confederates might have taken both places, and from Arlington bombarded Washington; but these important steps were not taken. In the Shenandoah Valley, Joseph E. Johnston had about 9,000 effective troops against 14,000 Federals under General Patterson. The Confederates were outnumbered; but they held the "interior line." By means of the Manassas Gap Railroad Johnston and Beauregard could reinforce each other, and concentrate enough men at either threatened point to offset the originally superior numbers at that point. Another small force, about 2,000 men, under General John Magruder, guarded the Peninsula—the approach to Richmond by way of Fortress Monroe up the James River. The feverish activity of the Union army under McDowell and the cry of the Northern press of "On to Richmond!" made it plain that there would be a battle soon.

On the 13th of July, 1861, Beauregard came to Richmond, where he met Davis, Cooper, and Lee in Davis's parlor in the Spotswood House; it was the first Confederate council of war ever held. Beauregard wanted to attack McDowell before he advanced farther in Virginia, with his own and with Johnston's command. McDowell defeated, and the combined Confederate armies would turn to Patterson in the Valley, crush him, march into Maryland, and dictate a victorious peace. In general it was the plan put into effect by Lee in 1862 and 1863, but now Lee vetoed it so successfully in the council that Beauregard was forbidden to try it out. The Washington forts, said Lee, were just in the rear of McDowell; he might retire into them, refuse to

fight, bring Patterson from the Valley, and crush the Confederates away from their base. The objection was sound; but the real reason may have been that Lee did not see Beauregard as the general to carry out an offensive campaign. However, McDowell's army was poorly organized and the Confederate troops man for man were at this early period far superior to the Union, and the plan might have succeeded. But it involved risks, and these Davis was not willing to take. It was safer to let McDowell make the first move.

He was not long making it. By July 18th his advance guard had reached Bull Run, some thirty miles from Washington, and on that day fought a slight engagement with the Confederates, who held the south bank of the creek. Davis telegraphed Johnston to move his army to Beauregard's assistance. By the night of the 20th, about seven thousand of Johnston's men had arrived; one of the brigades was commanded by an obscure and eccentric officer named Thomas J. Jackson. The opposing armies were now about equal—though the Federals had better artillery—for McDowell had been able to bring only 30,000 men to the field.

Next morning, the 21st, he surprised and crushed Beauregard's left flank, and early in the afternoon the roads to the rear of the Southern army were packed with stragglers and demoralized fugitives. President Davis had intended to get there before the battle began, perhaps, since he still thought of himself as a soldier, to step on the field and lead his men to victory. But the Congress had convened on the 20th; Beauregard may have foreseen the President's wish, for he sent him no warning; and Davis was delayed. When his train arrived in mid-afternoon at Manassas Junction, the signs of defeat were so obvious (to the civilian eye) that the conductor would not let the train go far-

ther. But the engine was detached and the President and his party reached the field. He made addresses in fine style to faint-hearted troops, and he was cheered. He came upon a dingy officer who was holding out his hand to a surgeon to have a wound bandaged. "Give me ten thousand men," the officer was saying, "and I'll be in Washington tomorrow." The President enquired what troops were these standing about doing nothing, and urged them to join the fight. Jackson, the wounded officer, coldly replied that the troops were his and that the battle was won. The last Federal troops were disappearing over the Stone Bridge in the direction of Washington. Davis went on, promising the famished men that rations would be sent to them, and such was his influence upon the battle.

Jackson's brigade, standing "like a stone wall" in a pine thicket, had saved the left wing from destruction, and the arrival of Kirby Smith's brigade had turned defeat to victory. Both sides had fought well, but both were undisciplined, and the luckiest side won. Lest the advantage be lost, Davis called a war council and urged Johnston and Beauregard to the pursuit. But neither of these generals, nor Davis himself, knew the extent of the victory. They offered excuses—there was no transportation; there were not enough supplies; the men were disorganized; there were the forts of Washington. Ten thousand men could have marched to Washington unopposed, and ended the war. Maryland would probably have seceded, and the Lincoln government could not have survived the blow.

The battle itself had been insignificant; only 18,000 men had fought on each side; but it is not too much to say that the first battle was decisive of the war. Never again did the Confederates have such a chance to take Washington. The inactivity

which followed the battle gave the North time to raise a great army: Lincoln asked Congress for 400,000 men and $400,000,000, and the organization of the Union army, under General George B. McClellan, proceeded methodically all summer without the slightest interference from the Confederates.

Davis was not satisfied with the failure of Johnston and Beauregard to pursue the enemy after Manassas, but he had no other generals who had proved more enterprising, and he could arrive at no positive plan of his own. The Southern volunteer, reflecting opinion at home, believed that the war was over; that the Yankee would not fight; and by the close of the summer Johnston's army at Manassas—Beauregard had yielded the command—was so reduced as to be inefficient. Davis knew that the war was not over, but he seems to have been lulled into false security by the pervading atmosphere. It was ever his tendency to postpone the evil day, and because the Federals were giving him a breathing space, he was content to breathe. Toombs, complaining that he gave advice never once heeded and conducted a foreign policy that had no aim but hope for the best, became disgusted in July and resigned from the State Department; he was succeeded by Robert M. T. Hunter, who was shortly to have a similar fate. The fire-eaters were everywhere disaffected, for Davis was doing nothing while the gigantic preparations of the North went steadily on.

The summer passed, and at the end of September Johnston and Beauregard, and Gustavus W. Smith, the next ranking officer, alarmed by their own idleness and by the growing menace of McClellan, invited the President to a conference at Fairfax Court House. They proposed to Davis an offensive campaign in Maryland, and asked for reinforcements. Davis asked how

many were needed. Johnston said 20,000, to bring the army up to 60,000 men; Smith said that 50,000 would do. Davis sadly replied that there were no troops available that were not necessary to protect other threatened points. There was truth in this, but the threats were not great, and Davis was instinctively holding to his policy of scattering his army in garrisons, of watchful waiting to see what the enemy would do. A large force could have been made up of men lying idle in North Carolina, at Charleston, at Pensacola; these places might have fallen to the Federals; but they would have been dropped like hot potatoes the moment Washington fell. Yet the risk was too great; and when the President feebly suggested that a force be sent across the Potomac below Washington to capture a Federal division under Hooker, a campaign that would have meant the loss of the capturing force, the conference broke up, and there was no real fighting in the east for the rest of the year.

Davis, not being a man of action, had no strategic plans, but he gave an almost fiendish energy to the details of war. From the very beginning he administered the army as if he were Secretary of War in Pierce's Cabinet in a time of peace: there was no bold originality of organization. He divided a beleaguered nation into military departments, each with a head responsible to him alone. There could be no coöperation on a grand scale. It is true that, in 1861, no general of outstanding offensive talent had appeared; Jackson was only an underling, chafing impatiently in his idleness; Lee, fighting McClellan in western Virginia, was so far a failure; Forrest was raising an irregular band of horse in Tennessee, but he was not even a professional soldier. In the fall of 1861, Sterling Price had almost wrested Missouri from the Union; but he was not a West Pointer; and it was said

that Davis was very nearly rude to him when he came to Richmond. Price had little chance of support, although there were thousands of troops at the end of 1861 that were doing nothing but being absent without leave. Davis's policy so far had not made it possible for an aggressive general to appear. But never again were the numbers of his army to be so nearly equal to the enemy's.

The inactivity of the government had permitted the popular overconfidence to undermine the war spirit. At the beginning of the new year McClellan's army totalled more than 100,000 men; another Federal army of about 30,000 threatened the Shenandoah Valley. Johnston, at Manassas, had fewer than 40,000; and Jackson, to meet 30,000, had only 4,000 men. In the West, Albert Sidney Johnston had been able to raise only about 30,000 against an army of 100,000 which General Halleck was preparing for the capture of the Mississippi Valley.

The North, at the beginning of 1862, had a sound military policy. East and west the utmost pressure was to be put upon the Confederacy. McClellan was to invade Virginia, take Richmond, and disperse the Confederate government. Halleck, who had succeeded the blustering Frémont in the West, would descend upon the Mississippi Valley through Tennessee. Smaller armies, backed by gunboats, would attack New Orleans, Pensacola, Charleston, Wilmington. The Richmond government had no strategy with which to checkmate this plan; it merely put its faith in meeting the combined attacks at their separate points —a hopeless position, since simple arithmetic showed that the South was already outnumbered in the field by more than two to one. While the South, after Manassas, settled into the secure sense of being a nation that had not yet been won, the North

gained time, which was practically all it needed—a commodity that the South could not afford to lose. The stage was set for the direst calamity, but the way Davis met it was to be the surprise and admiration of the world.

PART II

CHAPTER V

THE GREAT YEAR: 1862

I

WHEN Virginia seceded and Federal troops, passing through Baltimore, were mobbed by Southern men, excitement reached a high pitch that came to a climax in the victory at Manassas. Roger A. Pryor of Virginia, addressing a crowd in Montgomery, said that the capture of Washington should be undertaken without delay. In Charleston, when Kershaw's volunteers were departing for Richmond, a handsome palmetto flag was presented to them; Colonel Kershaw said: "Plant it wherever honor calls. If opportunity offers let it be the first to kiss the breeze of heaven from the dome of the Capitol at Washington." The Vice-President of the Confederacy, hailed by a crowd in Atlanta, said that Federal soldiers were smearing the walls of the sacred Capitol with "grease and filth like a set of vandal hordes," that it was "converted into a kitchen and quarters." "Let them destroy it, savage like, if they will," he said. "We will rebuild it. We will make the structure more glorious." Mr. Stephens, of course, had already sunk under the burden of two loyalties, for at Savannah he had glorified that other structure —the Southern—as forever severed from the North and rising upon Negro slavery, "the cornerstone of our new edifice." The speech was reported in England, where it embarrassed Mr. Yancey and did the Abolitionist cause much good.

Men everywhere declared that there could be no compromise with the "Abolition Power upon the basis of reconstruction" of the Union. Every Southern man would lay down his life that "he might not behold himself the serf of the Puritan or the father and companion of slaves." Before Manassas, the Richmond *Enquirer* said it was likely that "President Davis will soon march an army through North Carolina and Virginia to Washington. Those of our volunteers who have decided to join the Southern army . . . had better organize at once for that purpose, and keep their arms, accoutrements, uniforms, ammunition and knapsacks in constant readiness." But, after Manassas, enthusiasm weakened in the monotony of inactivity, which gave the public the illusion that there would be no more fighting. Early in August there were supposedly about 210,000 Confederates in arms, but probably fewer than 150,000 were fit for duty; sickness was prevalent, and absentees without leave were scattered all over the land. The enormous armies gathering in the North filled President Davis with anxiety, but there was only one thing to do —issue a call for volunteers. On August 8th he asked for 400,000 for not less than a year nor more than three. But by the beginning of the new year there were only about 340,000 enrolled—which meant less than 200,000 in the field. The war-fever had cooled. There had been no glorious march to Washington, and the tiresome round of camp duties, broken only by a spell of malaria or "summer sickness," seemed to be an imposition, particularly in view of the tangled affairs, the neglected crops back home. None of the volunteers had enlisted for more than one year; with the spring the Confederate army would melt; so a $50 bounty and sixty-day furlough were held out to those who would reënlist. The last session of the Provisional Congress, meeting on

November 18, 1861, was taken up with the problem of recruiting the army. There was no clear policy; one act amended another, often contradicted it; so that the military laws were a forest of red tape in which the unwilling soldier could find a hiding place.

In this crisis the Federal storm broke, and by the middle of February three disasters had fallen upon the Confederacy, from one of which, at least, it never recovered. About the middle of January General Ambrose E. Burnside sailed with an expedition from New York to the Carolina coast, where after more resistance from rough seas than from a Confederate army he easily captured Roanoke Island, and got a foothold for the invasion of the South by way of the sea. This, in itself, was a slight victory; it would be quickly neutralized if the main Confederate armies could defeat the large Union armies opposed to them. By the first of February, General Albert Sidney Johnston had about 40,000 men for the protection of Tennessee; a large detachment of this force under Polk held Columbus, Kentucky, on the Mississippi; on the extreme right, at Bowling Green, Johnston himself watched the menacing attitude of a Federal army, larger than his own combined, under Don Carlos Buell. A small force garrisoned Fort Henry on the Tennessee River, and a larger army, about 15,000, held Fort Donelson, on the Cumberland. If the Federals could take these two forts, the other Confederate forces would have to fall back into Mississippi or Alabama, and the Federal armies, by using their powerful fleet of transports and gunboats, could move unopposed into the heart of Tennessee.

At this point Ulysses S. Grant, who years before had retired from the regular army "under a cloud" of drunkenness and had difficulty getting even a subordinate command at the beginning of the war, now for the first time came upon a scene that he

was later to dominate. At the beginning of February he started from Cairo, Illinois, with 15,000 men and four iron-clads under Flag-Officer Foote, and steamed up the Tennessee River. On the 6th, he telegraphed Halleck: "Fort Henry is ours. I shall take and destroy Fort Donelson, on the 8th." But Grant was delayed; he did not reach Fort Donelson, twelve miles away, until the 12th. On the 15th, the Confederates, who slightly outnumbered the Federals, tried to cut their way out, and would have succeeded had not Generals Pillow and Floyd suddenly become demoralized; they withdrew to the fortifications. That night Pillow and Floyd escaped, leaving Emory R. Buckner in command, and Bedford Forrest got away with his cavalry. Next day Grant received reinforcements bringing his army to 27,000 men. The case was hopeless. On the 16th Buckner surrendered 12,000 men, 20,000 rifles, 48 cannon, 17 heavier guns, about 3,000 horses, and an immense quantity of supplies. Beauregard had urged Johnston to concentrate his army at Donelson and to take command in person. But Johnston, the great hope of the South, had shown little enterprise; he should doubtless have ignored Buell, heavily reinforced Fort Donelson, and crushed Grant.

The fall of Donelson and the capture of Roanoke Island came to the South as a slap in the face from an old and trusted friend. The situation was inexplicably reversed; in the summer the enemy had been turned back from the gates, but now the South, before it knew what had happened, had lost Kentucky and Tennessee, and was thrown on a perilous defensive. The public of course cried for a scapegoat, and Johnston himself, an idol a few days before, was bitterly attacked. A deputation from Tennessee went to Richmond to demand his removal, but Davis firmly replied: "If Sidney Johnston is not a general, I have none

to give you." Davis's support of Johnston is one of the most attractive incidents in his career, and the exchange of letters between the two men exhibits human nature at its rare best. Johnston made no excuses, saying that "the test of merit in my profession is success," and he refused to answer the public howl. Davis's confidence in him remained unshaken. The confidence was well placed, and yet its proud contempt of public opinion was a little disquieting, and it was later on to bring nothing less than havoc on the cause of the South. But both Davis and Johnston knew that those who complained most at the fall of Donelson had listened least to the call for men and arms. Such was the unreasoning state of the popular mind, which Davis ignored or scorned.

One scapegoat was not enough: Davis himself was the real point of attack, and the politicians cannily singled out the hated Benjamin as the President's most vulnerable spot. Walker had resigned in the summer of 1861: if Toombs, in the State Department, had been a clerk, Walker had been, in the War Department, a mere office boy. Benjamin, having made himself useful by never contradicting the President, had been promoted to Secretary of War. His scalp was demanded as an atonement for the disasters to the Southern arms. Henry S. Foote, Davis's lifelong enemy, now a member of the Congress, demanded an investigation of Benjamin's conduct, which was a covert attack on Davis himself. Could any one dare to question the wisdom and the motives of his, the President's, appointments? So, instead of gracefully delivering Benjamin up and thus conciliating the opposition, Davis promptly let it be known that Benjamin was not at fault. As if ironically, he removed Benjamin from the War Department and made him Secretary of State. The opposition

was infuriated. Benjamin's promotion was a far-reaching mistake; it sealed the opposition in their hatred of him; and now for the first time there is a powerful, outspoken anti-Davis party. Edmund Rhett, voicing the general dissatisfaction with the passive policy of Davis and with Davis's contempt for public opinion, said: "Jeff Davis is conceited, wrong-headed, wranglesome, obstinate, a traitor." He was none of these things. He would take advice—if it were sugar-coated with deference; he was obstinate only in the face of unjust criticism—and yet a politician must expect injustice; he was wranglesome—but only because he expected men like Governor Joe Brown to be moved by facts and logic: he expected them to accept his logic while he dealt hard with their vanity and self-esteem.

On the 19th of February, three days after Donelson, he wrote privately to General Joseph E. Johnston at Manassas: "Events have cast on our arms and hopes the gloomiest shadows, and at such a time we must show redoubled energy and resolution." Is it possible that Davis felt that he had not acted with enough resolution? The story of the chances of European intervention will detain us elsewhere: it is certain that Davis had depended upon them too much, that their failure had caught him without alternative measures. In this harrowing crisis, the permanent government of the Confederacy was installed on Washington's birthday—the day Lincoln had ordered an advance of all the Federal armies—and even the weather conspired with the despair men felt of what the future was to bring.

2

The 22nd of February, 1862, was a cold, rainy day. It had broken cloudy, and at ten o'clock a hard rain began falling that

lasted four hours. Davis returned home from an early visit to his office, and went to his room. There Mrs. Davis found him kneeling in prayer "for the divine support I need so sorely." He was about to break under the strain of the recent Confederate reverses; his chronic invalidism always became acute in such a crisis; and he had been an ill man for several weeks.

The inaugural ceremonies began in the old House of Representatives at the Capitol. "It was a grave and great assemblage," wrote a witness of the scene. "Time-honored men were there . . . of the old confederation; those who had been at the inauguration of the iron-willed Jackson; men who, in their fiery Southern ardor, had thrown down the gauntlet of defiance in the halls of Federal legislation, and in the face of the enemy had avowed their determination to be free. . . . All were there; and silent tears were seen coursing down the cheeks of gray-headed men, while the determined will stood out in every feature.

"The appearance of the President was singularly imposing, though there were visible traces of his profound emotion, and a pallor, painful to look upon, reminded the spectator of his recent severe indisposition. His dress was a plain citizen's suit of black. Mr. Hunter, of Virginia, temporary president of the Confederate Senate, occupied the right of the platform; Mr. Bocock, Speaker of the House of Representatives, the left. When President Davis, accompanied by Mr. Orr, of South Carolina . . . reached the hall and passed to the chair of the Speaker, subdued applause, becoming the place and the occasion, greeted him."

The procession filed slowly out of the east door of the Capitol toward the equestrian statue of Washington in the public square. Here, under a canopy which warded off the rain, the Right Reverend Bishop Johns offered a prayer for the divine

support of the new government. Then the President made his inaugural address to a vast crowd standing dismally under umbrellas in the driving rain. Briefly and eloquently he reviewed the motives and short history of the Confederacy, and proudly pointed out that "we have maintained the war by our unaided exertions. At the darkest hour of our struggle, the provisional gives way to the permanent government. After a series of successes and victories . . . we have recently met with serious disasters." The crowd did not miss the allusion to Fort Donelson, and it took little cheer from Davis's undaunted words.

On the way to the ceremonies Mrs. Davis suddenly discovered walking solemnly on each side of her carriage two Negroes dressed in somber broadcloth and top hats and wearing white cotton gloves. She asked the coachman what they were doing there. "Well, ma'am," he said, "you told me to fix everything up like it ought to be, and this yere's the way we do in Richmond at fun'rals an' sich-like."

After the inauguration was over all Richmond society went home to dress for the President's reception at the "White House." The rigors of the blockade had not yet reduced the ladies to last year's dresses made over with the dresses of the year before; the evening was brilliant—and highly democratic. Clerks, captains and lieutenants, even privates, mingled with the high officers in gold lace. In such a gathering, the President usually felt that pleasantries were more than he could bear. He was not an unpleasant man; he simply lacked, in the humorless intensity of his character, the ability to throw off his concentration and to relax. Mrs. Davis felt deeply the powerful opposition growing up about Davis, and she knew, with her usual astuteness, that it might have been allayed by cultivating the society of the mal-

contents; "but," said Mrs. Davis, "during every entertainment, without exception, either the death of a relation was announced to a guest, or a disaster to the Confederacy was telegraphed to the President."

"The President," said Mrs. Chesnut, the wife of an influential South Carolina politician and probably the most intelligent Southern woman of her time, whose diary is an invaluable record of small things illuminating great—"The President," she wrote, "walked with me slowly up and down the long room, and our conversation was of the saddest. Nobody knows so well as he the difficulties which beset this hard-driven Confederacy. He has a voice which is perfectly modulated, a comfort in this loud and rough soldier world. I think there is a melancholy cadence in his voice at times of which he is unconscious." This melancholy of the President increased as the spring of 1862 came on; more and more he became the solitary Hamlet walking the floor of his study, too proud to fight back openly at his enemies and too frail to bear his responsibility alone without periodically breaking down. "He was a nervous dyspeptic by habit, and if he was forced to eat under any excitement was ill after it for days. He said he could do either one duty or the other—give entertainments or administer the Government. . . . In the evening he was too exhausted to receive visitors." The Richmond *Examiner,* which now began to outdo even the Charleston *Mercury* in the unscrupulousness of its attacks on the President, inveighed against the unsocial and "superior dignity of the satraps," and added that the "President is getting rich on his savings." These attacks did the Confederacy incalculable harm, for instead of correcting the supposed evil that they aimed at they made it worse; the President shrank more deeply into his pride, for "even a child's

disapprobation discomposed him," and "the sense of mortification and injustice gave him a repellent manner."

A single trivial incident in Davis's life at this time exhibits his character at its most typical—that combination of absolutely unswerving integrity and the inability to mollify the ruffled feelings of men. A general in the field wrote to the President that a subordinate officer must be dismissed; this officer was an old friend of Davis's; and he was thus in a most embarrassing position. When the officer had received from the President the order dismissing him, he came on the ground of old friendship to plead his case; he said: "You know me; how could I ever hold my head up under the implied censure from you, my old friend?" Davis could easily have shifted the responsibility for the censure to his friend's superior officer, but the superior officer had written to him confidentially. Rather than break the confidence he would antagonize a friend; so he replied: "You have, I believe, your orders; I can suggest nothing but obedience." That evening he came home and went to his room without eating. Thus, in the same way, by degrees but rapidly, he lost the good will of his Congress. Once when the Congress passed a measure that infringed the constitutional rights of the President, he was not contented to quote the law; he went on, in his irritation, to say that the bill was an "inadvertence."

"He might be seen daily walking through the Capitol Square from his residence to the executive office in the morning, not to return until late in the afternoon. . . . He was tall, erect, slender, and of a dignified and soldierly bearing, with clear-cut and high-bred features, and of a demeanor of stately courtesy to all. He was always clad in Confederate gray cloth, and wore a soft felt hat with wide brim. Afoot, his step was brisk and firm; in the

saddle he rode admirably and with a martial aspect." Every afternoon he galloped out to one of the hundreds of camps encircling the city, and one day he was shot at from ambush; without the slightest trace of excitement he rode on. Later a man was arrested, but there was no evidence for a conviction, and the real assassin was never found.

April came, and new disasters, but still the South was without a great army to roll back the Federal tide. After the fall of Donelson, Sidney Johnston collected his scattered forces at Corinth, Mississippi, about twenty miles south of the Tennessee line. He was still the object of bitter attack; so he offered the command to Beauregard, who had been sent to serve as his second in command; but Beauregard refused it. By April 1st, Johnston had about 40,000 men, ill-armed and badly supplied. Braxton Bragg's corps from Pensacola had joined, but there were other considerable forces which, because of the departmental system, were not at Johnston's disposal. Grant, commanding the right wing of the Union army, was concentrating at Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River, twenty-five miles from Corinth; he had somewhat fewer than 40,000; but Buell was rapidly approaching with nearly 40,000 more.

Johnston decided to attack Grant before Buell arrived. The attack was scheduled for April 5th, but the inefficiency of the corps commanders delayed the march, and it was not made until dawn of the next day. However, the attack was a surprise—Grant was not even on the field—and until an hour before nightfall it swept everything before it; the Union army was on the very point of annihilation; but Johnston had been killed; and Beauregard, with an hour of daylight left to complete the victory, ordered the attack to cease. Two miles behind the front line,

he did not know that Grant's army was a horde of demoralized fugitives huddling on the bank of the river. That night Buell's army arrived, and next day the Confederates were driven from the field. This battle, named Shiloh from a log church where Beauregard had his headquarters on the second day, was the greatest struggle that had taken place in America up to that time. The South lost more than 10,000 men, and the North 13,000. One day's delay had turned certain victory into defeat.

Now Johnston, abused before the battle, was praised to the skies: if he had not been killed the battle would have been won —which is possibly true. Yet Johnston had nowhere fulfilled public expectations. And Beauregard became more and more unpopular, till finally Davis removed him from the command, on the pretext that he had deserted his army; Beauregard, a fine soldier whose one great weakness was overcaution, was too ill to remain in the field. His successor was Braxton Bragg, a good organizer, like General McClellan, and like McClellan again, utterly incompetent in the face of impending battle. His appointment was one of the few great mistakes that Davis made in selecting his generals; indeed it may be said that it was his only mistake; for all the others, as we shall see, came out of the complications of this single one.

The Confederate hope was to sink still lower. While Shiloh was being fought, Island Number Ten, in the Mississippi, the only strong fortress on the river north of Vicksburg, surrendered to the Federals with about 7,000 men. At the end of April New Orleans, the largest and most important city in the South, fell under the attack of Farragut's gunboats, and was occupied a few days later by an army under Benjamin Butler. Butler's treatment of the inhabitants was brutal in the extreme: if a woman showed

contempt for a Federal soldier she was to be "regarded and held liable to be treated as a woman of the town plying her vocation." Palmerston wrote to the Federal Minister, Charles Francis Adams: "If the Federal Government chooses to be served by men capable of such revolting outrages, they must submit to abide by the deserved opinion which mankind will form of their conduct." Palmerston's letter was a threat that gave Mr. Mason, the Confederate emissary, renewed hope of intervention; but Lincoln shrewdly repudiated Butler; and the incident passed. The fall of New Orleans stayed Napoleon III's hand from an attempt to break up the Federal blockade, and the good that seemed to be coming from evil was dashed to the ground.

By the first of May the Confederate line, in the west, had been pushed back two hundred miles, from Columbus and Bowling Green in Kentucky, to Tupelo, Mississippi. The upper and the lower Mississippi were in the hands of the enemy; only Vicksburg and the batteries at Port Hudson maintained connection between the east and the rich country—rich in men and supplies—west of the river. In Virginia, the whole northern neck, the country between Washington and the Rappahannock, was in Federal hands. McClellan had transferred his great army to Fortress Monroe, to attack Richmond from the southeast; he outnumbered Joseph E. Johnston more than two to one. The passive and dispersive strategy of the South had brought her to the brink of ruin.

3

There are two plausible explanations of Davis's disastrous policy up to the spring of 1862, and there is a point at which the two merge into one. In the first place, he was temperamentally

opposed to aggressive action, for what reason we can only imagine. We have seen that he entered the war with a divided mind, that he lacked the fierce unreasoning Southern patriotism of Toombs and Rhett; he was much closer to the State Rights doctrinaires like Stephens and Brown. He entered the war less out of the sheer desire to win than with the idea of vindicating a political principle, but unfortunately abstractions are capable of doing very little work. Secondly, the passive defensive policy was theoretically in harmony with the abstract principles that the Confederacy stood for. The mistake of Davis, the mistake of all theorists, rests upon the assumption that abstractions are real motives driving men to action, that the abstractions must be looked to first of all. But the great need of the time was independence at any cost. Aside from all questions of political theory, Davis, constantly oppressed by his staggering responsibility, was not willing to take risks. He saw, from the outset, that military concentration was necessary, but it involved the uncovering, perhaps the temporary loss, of considerable territories; he could not bring himself to yield these tangible possessions to the prospect of greater gains in the end.

But, by the end of February, 1862, Jefferson Davis saw that European intervention would not come in time to win the spring campaign—his chief resource of victory up to that time. He changed his policy. It is by no means easy for a man to unsettle all his confirmed habits of thought and to strike out vigorously in a new direction; but Davis did this. And the new policy marks him as a great man.

The greatest need was a large army, which alone would rescue the Confederacy from its imminent peril, and Davis knew there was only one way to get it—conscription. After weeks of dis-

cussion in Congress a bill was passed, on April 16th, providing for the drafting of all citizens between eighteen and thirty-five. The twelve-months men, whose discharge was almost due, were retained in the service automatically for three years from the date of their original enlistment: it was to retain these men, whose release would have meant the collapse of the Southern army, that the draft bill had been passed, and also to stimulate volunteering. Thousands of men joined the army to escape the odium of conscription, and by midsummer of 1862 it numbered in the field about 400,000 men. The actual conscripts were few; in Georgia, from April to September, there were fewer than 3,000 drafted; men anticipated the draft by hurriedly gathering into volunteer companies flaunting war-like and high-sounding names —The Dixie Eagles, The Dixie Sledge Guard, The Lula Guards, The Columbus Rebels, The Louisiana Tigers. New companies advertised in the newspapers:

ATTENTION!

Fifty Dollars Bounty!

Fifty dollars will be paid as soon as the company is mustered into service. Arms of the first class will be furnished. Call at Cook's Hotel and enroll your names, and save the Bounty and not be a Conscript.

By the middle of June the great armies were gathered that enabled Lee and Jackson to win the victories of the Seven Days, Cedar Mountain, Second Manassas.

It was Davis who gathered them, and to his courage and determination in the crisis the credit is due. There had never been a draft in American history, and the very idea was repellent to Americans, particularly in the individualistic South. But there was no other way to save the country, and Davis, knowing

well the storm of opposition that would meet the draft, willingly undertook the responsibility. It was the first symptom of a vigorous policy in the Confederate government, and for a while the Rhett faction seemed to be conciliated; the Charleston *Mercury* had for the draft nothing but praise, and the Richmond *Examiner* contested the *Mercury's* claim to have agitated first in favor of conscription. The enmity towards Davis, however, did not wholly relax: he was said to have been forced into such a strong measure by circumstance. The Vice-President, Mr. Stephens, said that the new energy of the government "resembled that of a turtle after fire has been put upon his back."

Jefferson Davis now exchanged one set of enemies for another. Rhett had opposed Davis because he took too little power; the new faction, the State Rightists, cried out against the tyranny of the central government. Conscription was, to these people, a flagrant violation of State Rights, an attempt to subvert the liberties of the people; and when Congress, at Davis's urgent request, permitted him for a limited period to suspend the writ of *habeas corpus,* so that conscription could be enforced, the doctrinaires attacked Davis as a dictator who wished to centralize the military power in order to oppress the people. It was, they wailed, a new form of despotism worse than any that had been practiced upon the South by the Federal government. The people, said the brother of the Vice-President, would not consent to be coerced by "all the judicial tribunals on earth." Mr. Stephens himself became the bitterest enemy of his own Administration; he and the governor of Georgia, Joseph E. Brown, did everything that disgruntled ingenuity could devise to cripple the war power of the Confederacy, and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that they helped the Union as efficiently as an army of 40,000

men. They were sincere, but they knew not what they did. "There is nothing," wrote Stephens, "that has given me half so much concern lately as these . . . military orders and usurpations. Not even the fall of New Orleans. . . . Better in my judgment that Richmond should fall . . . than that our people should submissively yield obedience. . . . I do not question the patriotism . . . but it is the principle involved." What Stephens and the other martinets failed to see was that the states, at least in the South, had no rights until they were won on the battlefield.

The whole man power of the South was, theoretically, put under arms, but the attitude of the State Rightists gave much comfort to the deserters and the slackers. There was no doubt that conscription and the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* had, as a friend of these measures put it, opened Pandora's box in the Confederacy. It was never closed. Possibly such strong measures would not have been necessary had Davis shown more energy in 1861; he could not act vigorously until he was cornered; but from now on every one of his major policies was wise and necessary, and, with the proper support, might have saved the South. But conscription, on the whole, succeeded, in spite of the fact that substitution was permitted. Substitution became a business; agencies for it thrived. A substitute got as much as $4000. A man in Hanover County, Virginia, offered a farm of 230 acres to any one who would take his place in the army. Many substitutes never went to the army. A mere paper substitute was enough to permit a man to engage in the pleasant business of profiteering and to "cuss" the Yankees as piously as the purest patriot. Sons of wealthy families—a small but considerable minority—suddenly acquired bad health, and had to go abroad to recuperate in the fogs and drizzles of northern

Europe. The burden of the war thus fell upon the poor—in spite of conscription, which was designed to relieve them—and class feeling became specially bitter over the "twenty nigger" clause of the conscription act. Farm produce, both for the army and for the people, had to be raised; a man who had twenty slaves was allowed to stay home to keep them at work. A planter in Alabama who owned exactly nineteen Negroes was wailing over his fate, when suddenly one of his females dropped a pickaninny and exempted him into undisturbed napping on his verandah. This law was later modified, but its sting never ceased to be felt; it did great harm, though it was theoretically sound. Druggists were exempt; so very soon owners of general stores and indeed small merchants of all sorts became apothecaries by virtue of a single shelf of household remedies. Ministers at first were exempt, and there was feverish zeal to propagate the faith; so were a certain number of school teachers, and this modest calling became immensely popular. Small state offices were likewise coveted. Perhaps the greatest harm done the Confederacy was the work of governors like Joe Brown, who enrolled thousands of men in a paper state guard for the express purpose of thwarting the war purposes of the central government; in this, there was an incredible mixture of state pride, political jealousy, ignorance, sincerity. Brown tried to confiscate arms consigned to the Confederacy because they arrived in his port of Savannah. All these abuses were like a small hound at the heels of a great stag; when the stag grew tired and lagged from grievous wounds, the insignificant dog was enough to worry him to his death.

By the late spring Jefferson Davis was at the height of his powers. He had thrown every minor consideration aside in order to create a great army, and for this he had flouted in temporary

necessity the principle the South stood for. He knew the risk he took: "If we succeed, we shall hear nothing of these malcontents; if we do not, then I shall be held accountable by the majority of friends as well as foes." His eyes were open, and only a great and fearless character would have plunged into those extreme measures that might have saved the South.

Now occurred one of those events that people have been wont to ascribe to fate, or to the irresistible merit of Lee. It is not true that Davis was a stubborn tyrant who took no advice: he felt the need of advice to the end. Perhaps Benjamin flattered him, but Davis knew the difference between flattery—thus early he did—and expert opinion. The new Secretary of War, George W. Randolph, an able but unskilled man, never gained his confidence. So Davis called upon Lee as the military adviser to the government. Lee's ability was not generally known; he had failed in western Virginia; and Pollard, whose editorials in the *Examiner* were grotesque masterpieces of abuse, shouted that Lee was a book soldier and, because he advocated intrenchments, a coward. To Davis alone the honor is due for the recognition of the genius of Lee. There is no denying that Davis preferred to discover talent that had been to West Point (wherefore he ignored Forrest and Price) or talent that at least had the manners of the gentry (wherefore he was not soon enough impressed with Jackson); but it is better to discover some talent than none, and it is an achievement to discover the best, which Davis did.

4

After the battle of Shiloh there was, for some months, almost no fighting in the West, but by April, in the East, the stage was

being set for that moving drama of arms that gave the Army of Northern Virginia an imperishable fame in the annals of war. Johnston, by the first of May, had moved his whole army of 53,000 men to the peninsula between the York and James Rivers, where he opposed General McClellan, who had about 105,000 men. The Confederates won a small rear-guard action at Williamsburg, but McClellan was slowly pushing them back, until at last Johnston, whose weakness was unwillingness to face the issue of battle, had retreated almost to the suburbs of Richmond. The President, riding out to the camps, suddenly came upon a park of artillery on the edge of the city; refusing to interfere with an officer in the field, he had not known that Johnston had retreated so far. Johnston had not kept him informed. Davis demanded a battle—which Johnston at last delivered on the 31st of May. The retreat had been highly strategic, for it ended with the Union army being divided by the swampy and difficult Chickahominy River, and Johnston attacked the isolated corps south of the river. If the subordinate officers had been equal to their jobs, the battle of Seven Pines would have been a great Southern victory. It ended a drawn battle; but the advantage remained with the Confederates. Johnston, an able soldier but not the man for the crisis, was wounded. Davis without the slightest hesitation in the face of hostile opinion appointed Lee to the command. Seven Pines checked McClellan, who was morbidly cautious, and gave the Confederates what, at the moment, they most needed—a great leader and time.

While Lee was strengthening the defenses of Richmond, Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley was fighting a small, brilliant, and highly important campaign. With a force never larger than 18,000 men he routed armies totalling more than 60,000, and

threw the North into panic lest he should take Washington. Lincoln, who at this time had not learned the danger of controlling armies from an executive's desk, played his forces into Jackson's hands, sending detachments needed by McClellan to capture Jackson, who defeated and eluded them all. McClellan being thus crippled—though, even so, his single army outnumbered all the Confederates in Virginia—Lee swiftly transferred Jackson to Richmond where the united forces reached about 90,000 men, the largest Confederate army ever in the field.

For weeks the alarm in Richmond had driven men, women, and children to the security of the country farther south. When Johnston left the peninsula, the Confederate iron-clad *Virginia,* which had played havoc with the Federal navy until stopped by the famous *Monitor,* had to be destroyed, and the James River was open to Federal gunboats. A flotilla steamed up as far as Drewry's Bluff, six miles from the city; hastily manned batteries turned back the menace, and the panic in the capital somewhat subsided. But the alarm was great. Parties of citizens and gangs of slaves worked day and night on the fortifications. They were determined to see the city destroyed perhaps, but never surrendered. McClellan's picket line was only four miles away; the citizens could hear the hostile bugle calls. Greater crises off the stage of action came and went unnoticed, but the visible menace of the invaders brought a crisis that every man could understand.

Davis was by no means optimistic: he had confidence in Lee, but it must be remembered that that great soldier had not yet performed those wonders which were later to justify the President's appointment. To his wife, who had gone with the children to Raleigh, North Carolina, he wrote: "I know not what to expect when so many failures are to be remembered, yet will

try to make a successful resistance. . . ." The emergency was so threatening that all the government archives were loaded in cars for immediate flight. The strain upon Davis was terrific, and it was, perhaps, the awful suspense that led him at this time to join the church; but he was instinctively religious and he would doubtless have come to it sooner or later; he had been brought up in a Baptist family, but his West Point training and the ideals of the Lower South had transformed the poor farmer's son into the Complete Aristocrat, and his choice of the Episcopal Church was probably not accidental. His enemy, the *Examiner,* by no means impressed with his heroic effort of the last few months, improved its opportunity by drawing a portrait of the President cringing in a corner of St. Paul's Church "telling his beads."

Now that Stonewall Jackson had dispersed McClellan's reinforcements, Lee moved swiftly to the execution of his plan to raise the siege of Richmond. The intrenchments that the *Examiner* had held up to scornful ridicule were easily manned by less than a third of Lee's army, and the remaining 60,000 men were liberated for a most audacious offensive. Lee, following Napoleon's rule, had not failed to study the character of his opponents; he knew that McClellan was overcautious and vacillating, and that he supposed the Confederates numbered at least 200,000 men. When Lee divided his army, McClellan was firmly convinced that he had the 200,000; for, without that number, he, in Lee's place, would never have undertaken so bold a plan. On the 26th of June, 1862, Lee threw his army upon the 30,000 Federals that were isolated north of the Chickahominy River, under Fitz John Porter, a distinguished soldier. The Seven Days Battles had begun.

Not only anxiety but a desire to lead armies and to participate

in battles kept Jefferson Davis daily at the front. He still believed in his own military gifts; it was not until 1864 that he put aside this phase of his ambition. He once said, with unconscious irony: "If I could take one wing and Lee the other, I think we could between us wrest a victory from those people." At the engagement at Ellerson's Mill, which opened the Seven Days, Davis appeared, and found Lee busily giving orders to his staff. Shells were bursting nearby, bullets singing in the air. Lee nodded coldly to the President, and pointing at the President's numerous staff, asked with some asperity: "Who are all this army of people, and what are they doing here?"

Davis, startled at the brusque reception he had got, replied: "It is not my army, general."

"It is certainly not my army, Mr. President," said Lee, "and this is no place for it."

"Well, general, if I withdraw, perhaps they will follow." Davis in the embarrassed silence rode away, but not from the field; he concealed himself behind an embankment, not from the enemy's bullets but from the more terrifying Lee.

5

The day after Ellerson's Mill, the great battle of Gaines's Mill took place; Porter was overwhelmed, but he was not annihilated as Lee had hoped he would be; he made good his retreat to the south bank of the Chickahominy where he joined McClellan's main body. Lee expected McClellan to retreat down the peninsula, and he delayed a day for the retreat to begin; during this one day McClellan was retreating to the James River; Lee's miscalculation had saved the Army of the Potomac from destruc-

tion. McClellan could not fight, but his retreat was masterly; at Malvern Hill he turned and gave Lee a bloody check. Yet the retreat continued to the protection of the gunboats on the James, for McClellan was demoralized. There, in an unfortified camp at Westover Landing, he might still have been destroyed if he had been pursued more closely. At a famous council of war held at the Poindexter mansion near Malvern Hill, Lee permitted the cautious President to overrule his desire for vigorous pursuit. Jackson alone sat in dour and impatient silence. McClellan had been defeated and driven from Richmond, and the President, fearful of risks, was contented. His natural caution made him here, as always, satisfied with less than decisive results, and his motto might well have been: Sufficient unto the day is the *good* thereof.

Lee's great victory changed the whole character of the war. The finest army of the Union had been put *hors de combat* for several months, and the initiative was in the hands of the Confederates. But, again, Davis's caution had its influence upon the temerarious Lee. The President could not believe that McClellan was utterly disposed of, and a proposal from Jackson, made right after the Seven Days, went unnoticed: Jackson proposed to ignore McClellan and invade the North with 60,000 men. By the middle of August, when it was certain that McClellan, now reduced to a mere corps commander, had withdrawn from the peninsula, this was done; but by that time a reorganized Army of the Potomac, under John Pope, who had captured Island Number Ten, was organized and in the way.

Lee now moved to "suppress Pope" before McClellan's corps could reinforce him. Lee, still studying the character of his opponent—who this time was a rattle-brained braggart—con-

temptuously divided his army, sending Jackson with about 25,000 men to Pope's rear at Manassas Junction. Jackson cut Pope's communications with Washington and burnt millions in supplies. Lee followed with the rest of his army at a distance of fifty miles. Jackson held Pope at bay, and even deluded him into thinking that he had gained an advantage; then Lee arrived. Next day the united Confederate army crushed and routed Pope, 55,000 against 70,000, and threatened Washington. This great battle, Second Manassas, was a strategic and tactical masterpiece, perfect in every detail, Napoleonic in its conception and performance. From this time Lee's prestige rose, never to sink again until Americans have succeeded in turning themselves into machines without memory.

Nevertheless, Lee was in a dilemma: he had defeated Pope, but he was too weak to besiege Washington. What should he do? He wrote to the President that he could not afford to be idle, but that he lacked equipment for an invasion; his army had few wagons and his men were without shoes. Davis, for the moment, was directing most of his attention to the West, where Bragg promised success; but he gave his consent to Lee's invasion of Maryland, actually a more risky movement in 1862 than it would have been in 1861 when the Federals were ill-prepared to meet it. However, the rewards of success would be great, and Davis had unreserved confidence in Robert E. Lee. The anti-war party at the North was clamoring for peace, saying that the mightiest of armies had not been able to defeat the South, and the belief in the invincibility of Lee had spread to England, where agitation for recognition of the Confederacy was redoubled both by Mr. Mason and by his friends in Parliament. When Lee crossed the Potomac on September 2nd, 1862, more

was at stake than even Davis realized: Mason was told that England would await the results of the Maryland campaign. Men everywhere believed that now the South would win.

The President sent instructions to Lee to issue an address to the people of Maryland explaining again the purposes, the "war aims," of the South, in the hope that even at this late hour Maryland might be brought to secede. Lee himself seemed to expect recruits to rally to his army: the women rallied, but the men, more cautious, stayed at home. Lee moved into western Maryland, near Hagerstown, and by the middle of the month his army, ill-fed and barefooted, had lost heavily by straggling and numbered all together not more than 40,000 men. In the crisis of the North, McClellan, though bitterly hated by the radical Abolitionists because he was a Democrat, was restored to command. Faced with the character he knew, Lee again divided his army in the menace of still greater odds, sending Jackson to capture Harper's Ferry, which fell with a Union loss of 12,000 men. Lee, at this juncture, would have done well to return to Virginia; yet he knew a victory over McClellan would mean Southern independence, and he was willing to run all risks. The Union army, sent to pursue him, numbered 87,000 men.

Lee had depended upon McClellan's vacillation for time to rest his army and to get his stragglers up, but McClellan came on swiftly and took him by surprise. One of Lee's generals had lost his copy of the order containing the Confederate plan of campaign; it was found in Frederick, Maryland, and taken to McClellan. Jackson rejoined Lee just in time for the bloody battle of Sharpsburg, which in some respects was the greatest feat of Southern arms. Again Lee fought a perfect battle, and with 39,000 men defeated every attack of 87,000. The Federals,

recently defeated, moved without flinching to the charge; the Confederates, meeting them "with a steadiness more than Roman," hurled them back, till at nightfall the ranks of entire Confederate brigades lay dead in the line. But Lee lacked the men for a counter stroke, and he was forced to retreat into Virginia. Nothing but fame was won by the battle on the Antietam, for a tactical victory was turned, by retreat, into a strategic defeat which permitted Lincoln to issue his first Emancipation Proclamation and shook the belief that Lee could perform miracles. British intervention was consequently indefinitely postponed. Sharpsburg was as decisive a battle as Gettysburg, just as First Manassas was more decisive than either; the longer the war lasted the smaller the chance the South had to win. But Lee's great campaign had convinced the North that the easy victory expected in the spring was not to be won. Richmond was out of danger, and would be for two years, while Washington was menaced again and again. A month after Sharpsburg Lee's army rose to 78,000 men, not the largest but the best and most seasoned that he ever commanded.

In the West the Confederate offensive led by Braxton Bragg was rolled back without a decisive battle. Davis had entertained great hopes of this invasion of Kentucky, but at the outset the campaign had two handicaps that were insuperable. First, it was undertaken, as Joe Johnston querulously but truthfully said, without fighting the opposing army. Not the Union army but the Kentucky country was the mistaken objective of the campaign: Lee defeated the army opposed to him before he invaded Maryland, and Bragg should have defeated Grant and Buell before he marched north into Kentucky. He entered Kentucky with a powerful, undefeated army on his track. Davis's political

aims here crippled his military judgment, for he expected the Kentuckians to respond to a proclamation unsupported by victory, which is always the most persuasive appeal to sentiment. Buell outgeneraled Bragg, forcing him to fight two indecisive battles, one at Perryville and one at Richmond, with divided forces. Unable to hold his ground, after almost capturing Louisville and Cincinnati, he withdrew to Tennessee Kentucky was lost to the Confederacy forever, but Bragg's army had not been defeated and by fall it was an army of veterans, powerful and well-organized; for Bragg was a good administrator and a sound disciplinarian.

The second handicap to the invasion was the faulty character and the incompetence of Bragg himself; he was capable of energy of the hysterical kind only, and when that failed he invariably found a scapegoat to bear the blame. The rank and file did not trust him—a bad sign—and his officers, Hardee, Polk, Forrest, Breckinridge, had lost all confidence whatever in him. What should Davis do? He could not ignore the dissatisfaction that Bragg had created; and yet Bragg was his choice and he would take no dictation. By October the summer campaigns had brought forth most of the military talent in the Confederacy. In Bragg's own army there was a genius of the first order—Nathan Bedford Forrest—of whom Lee said at the end of the war in answer to a question of who was the best subordinate officer in the Southern armies: "He was a man I never saw; his name is Forrest." But Forrest, a cavalryman, had not commanded large bodies of men, and thus early, 1862, there was some excuse for overlooking him. There was no excuse in the case of Stonewall Jackson. His Valley campaign and his great flank march at Manassas had shown him to be a general second

(from an old print)

Confederate Generals

to none, perhaps not even to Lee. Jackson was not once thought of for the western command, and Davis's neglect of this great military genius has never been explained. The difficulty of penetrating contemporary events may have had something to do with it, for it appeared at a glance that all of Lee's successes had been solely the work of Lee; but the more plausible reason was that Jackson had no political claims on the government; he was coldly and unflatteringly courteous to all his superiors but Lee; and he was known to oppose the passive policy of the administration. Because Lee would never consent to leave Virginia, Jackson was the only man available for the most important command in the Confederacy—the western army. One of the baneful effects of removing the capital to Richmond was the excessive attention that Lee drew to his army because of his own genius, to the neglect of the vitally important strategic center of the Confederacy. In the bad strategic position of northern Virginia the best that Lee, in the end, could do was hold his own—while the issue of the war was actually being decided in the West, under inefficient generals. Contrary to popular belief Davis did not interfere with his officers; in fact, he supported them even after support was disastrous to the cause; this was particularly true of Braxton Bragg's case.

The failure of the Confederate offensive on three fronts—Maryland, Kentucky, and Arkansas, where Earl Van Dorn with a small army had been driven back—was followed by great depression throughout the South and by renewed bitterness from the anti-administration men. The pressure of the Federal blockade was at last reducing the population to want, and Mr. Mason, in England, could no longer pretend that it was not effective. It was now almost impossible to ship cotton in large quantities;

the little that went out of the country made huge profits for the speculators, who hoarded their gold. Paper money was steadily declining; its value depended not upon securities but upon military success. Lee had won great victories, but victory short of complete independence was defeat. The *Examiner* and the *Mercury* carped relentlessly at the President, and there was no way to control the opposition. He did not know how to conciliate it. He once wrote to his wife: "I wish I could learn just to let people alone who snap at me; in forbearance and charity to turn away as well from the cats as the snakes. . . ." There is something almost pathetic in this failure to understand his position. It was to his lasting credit that he wished to display the Christian virtues of charity and forbearance; but what his country needed was the Machiavellian virtue of policy.

In the fall of 1862 there occurred another change in Davis's Cabinet, one that on the whole was fortunate for the cause of the South. When Lee, at the beginning of the Second Manassas-Antietam campaign, left the environs of Richmond, Davis no longer had an adviser whom he could trust. He never got along with Randolph, and he was determined to replace him; but he could not even do that without making him an enemy. He wrote him a number of curt reproofs for small deviations from his own policy; their insulting tone screams from the words to this day. Randolph resigned, and James A. Seddon, a shrewd lawyer who, without military experience, had military sense, took his place. Joseph E. Johnston and Gustavus W. Smith had been under consideration, and it was a mistake not to appoint Johnston; but Seddon was the best civilian appointment he could have made. He greatly influenced the President until the fall of Vicksburg.

Davis took advice, but Seddon was one of the rare men Davis called upon who were qualified to give it, or who could give it disinterestedly. There is no doubt that Davis had favorites, for only on this supposition can the influence of Bragg, who lost the Confederate cause in the West, be explained: Bragg never crossed the President's opinions. Davis could not use talent that took too lightly his dignity, and he could not take advice, however good, that was not delivered in a soothing tone. Courtesy should no doubt be equal to all strains put upon it, and yet nice manners suffer terribly in war. It is hard to imagine Davis saying of a general what Lincoln said of McClellan, who had grossly insulted him: "Never mind. I will hold McClellan's horse if he will only give us victory." When Bragg began to be unpopular, a delegation from Louisiana came to Davis to ask that Beauregard be restored to the command, and Davis is said to have replied that Beauregard would not be restored if the whole world should ask it!

Davis was personally sympathetic to Seddon, who, besides being smooth and urbane in his approach, was, like Davis, a perennially sick man destined to live to a ripe old age. Both were neurotics and dyspeptics; indeed, dyspepsia was so common among Confederate leaders that it must have affected the cause of the South tremendously; though historians, discreetly partial to mineral resources and ratios of population, have given mere temperament short shrift in the grander proportions of history. Seddon was "gaunt and emaciated, with long, straggling hair. He looks like a dead man galvanized into muscular animation. His eyes are sunken, and his features have the hue of a man who has been in the grave a full month." Nevertheless, he was

a clear-headed and far-seeing man who deserves a larger place in history than he now occupies.

In November, 1862, Davis made an enemy of Senator Louis T. Wigfall, of Texas, and the alienation of the fire-eating secessionists was complete. Wigfall had criticized the inefficient General Theophilus Holmes, but Holmes, a failure in all campaigns, was a favorite, and Wigfall received a sharp reprimand. At this time Wigfall, knowing that Randolph was to be superseded, came to Davis to offer advice on the next appointment—not an abnormal procedure in politics. Davis let Wigfall talk, but did not tell him that Seddon had been chosen; so, next day, when Wigfall read the announcement in a newspaper, he was bitterly disappointed and felt duped. He was one of the few State Rightists who had supported the President in the draft, but now he was an implacable enemy, in the ranks of Rhett, Yancey, and Toombs, till the end of the war. "He was a friend lost by pure inadvertence and perversity." Davis's nerves were unequal to his courage and fidelity.

The months of July and August, 1862, were undoubtedly the peak of Davis's career, from his own viewpoint: he had raised, in spite of bitter opposition, a large and powerful army; he had turned the enemy back from the gates of Richmond; he had supported on his own responsibility an officer who twice defeated an army larger than his own and fought a drawn battle north of the Potomac, threatening Washington; he had, in short, emerged from imminent defeat to the offensive, and victory appeared to be at hand. Although the Confederate offensive had momentarily failed, and could not be attempted again with the same advantages, the outlook—except to a prophet, and prophets were rare—was brighter in November than in May. But the

public and the repudiated radical leaders were dissatisfied with anything less than victory; and Davis does not appear to have estimated correctly the meaning of the failure of the Maryland campaign; he did not see the importance of offensive war to the cause of the South. As a matter of fact, the return of the army towards Richmond after Antietam gave him some vindictive satisfaction; he wrote to Lee: "The feverish anxiety to invade the North has been relieved by the counter irritant of apprehension for the safety of the Capital in the absence of an army so long criticized for a 'want of dash,' and the class who so vociferously urged a forward movement in which they were not personally involved would now be most pleased to welcome a return of that army." Because the South was on the political defensive she must fight a defensive war. Davis would probably have repudiated such a parallelism of ideas, but it was there, and it was there more deeply than he knew—emotionally, below his power of reason. The expectation of foreign aid was the result of his defensive policy, not, as has been supposed, the cause; though, a year later, 1863, he began looking to Europe as a man clutches at straws, only to find that no straws were there.

6

If the President was temperamentally and politically set against aggressive warfare, he was equally jealous of his territory, and if he could avoid it would not give an inch. It was for this reason that he had divided the country into departments of scattered garrisons; he hated to yield country even temporarily until he was compelled to—and thus the Confederacy was "nibbled away." The small garrisons fell one by one till there

was nothing left; and while the process was slower than it might have been if Davis had concentrated his armies, the result was the same, without possible success. This policy crippled the Confederacy in the last campaign of 1862, when Lee might have ended the war with one stroke.

After Antietam, Lee fell back unmolested into Virginia, McClellan following very slowly and at a distance; and for the second time in six months "Jeb" Stuart with his cavalry rode round the whole Union army. McClellan, prodded by Lincoln, crossed into Virginia with an excellent plan of campaign; it might have succeeded; but on November 7th he at last fell a victim to his own cautiousness and to his political enemies in Washington, and was removed from the command. Ambrose E. Burnside succeeded him. This officer, thoroughly incompetent and so thoroughly honest that he admitted his incompetence not only to himself but to Lincoln, did not desire the position; but he obeyed orders. President Lincoln was so disappointed at the results of the summer that he urged Burnside to advance on Richmond in spite of the approach of bad weather and the difficulties of Virginia mud. Burnside was not slow to advance. He decided to march to Richmond by way of Fredericksburg.

Lee and Jackson urged Davis to let Burnside cross the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg unopposed: they wished to lead him away from his communications to the North Anna River and to compel him to fight with his back to the stream, where, if defeated, his army would be destroyed. But between the Rappahannock and the North Anna lay thirty miles of Virginia territory which Davis was not willing to give up without a fight: he preferred the ultimate risks of indecisive victory to the temporary loss of ground: he told Lee to oppose the enemy at Fredericks-

burg. There, also, Burnside had a river at his back, but beyond the river rose high hills from which artillery could protect an army no matter how badly defeated. Lee himself was partly to blame; he was something of a governmental martinet; for he would not override the constituted authority of the President—an authority that had only as much permanence as he himself could give it by force of arms.

On the 13th of December, 1862, Burnside hurled column after column against Lee's almost impregnable position; at nightfall about 13,000 Federals had been slaughtered; only 3,000 Confederates fell. The Union army was demoralized, and the most demoralized man in it was Burnside: he was beside himself, and wished to hurl more columns against Lee the next day; his officers refused to lead them. At the end of the battle Lee could not deliver a counter-stroke under the powerful Federal batteries across the river. There is little doubt that Burnside elsewhere would have been destroyed; the Army of the Potomac was to have other bad commanders, but Burnside was heaven-sent, and Lee would never meet his like again. Jackson was enraged and desperate that Burnside should be so sorely beaten only to escape, and he asked Lee to launch a night attack, tying white rags to the sleeves of the Confederates to distinguish them from the enemy; the Federals were crowded on the river bank, and the attack would have been highly successful butchery. Lee refused. It was not his idea of playing the game. Jackson played only one game—the game that wins.

The two armies went into winter quarters, and the fighting of 1862 came to an end. The issue was again postponed. Just before the battle of Fredericksburg President Davis decided to make a tour of inspection in the West: there was trouble brewing there.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONFEDERACY ABROAD

I

IN August of 1861 the *San Jacinto,* one of a squadron of vessels that for some twenty months had been engaged in trying to suppress the slave trade on the coast of Africa, was put in command of Captain Charles Wilkes, and ordered to Fernando Po. Captain Wilkes was already well known for his explorations in the South Polar seas. He was soon to become internationally famous. A restless and active gentleman, he put out at once for St. Thomas when he heard that Confederate privateers were burning merchantmen in the West Indian waters. At St. Thomas, however, he heard news that excited him still more. The captain of a British merchantman whom he met there reported the presence in those waters of a mysterious craft which might well be the *Sumter,* the famous Confederate commerce destroyer commanded by Captain Raphael Semmes. The *San Jacinto,* accompanied by the *Powhatan* and the *Iroquois,* at once set off in pursuit. But at Cienfuegos Captain Wilkes read in the newspapers that a little Confederate privateer had run the blockade at Charleston on the dark and rainy night of October 11th, bearing James M. Mason and John Slidell, the Confederate commissioners to England and France, to a Cuban port. The commissioners, it was rumored, would sail November

7th on the British mail packet *Trent* for St. Thomas, where they expected to make connections with a British steamer for Southampton.

The *San Jacinto,* after a futile chase of the Confederate privateer that had borne the commissioners, settled down to await the *Trent* in the old Bahama channel. Lieutenant Fairfax was of the opinion that the *San Jacinto* would better let the *Trent* go her way unmolested. Captain Wilkes seems never to have entertained this idea, but he employed the time of waiting in looking up certain precedents of maritime law that fortified him in his course of action. About noon of the next day the *Trent's* smoke was seen on the horizon. The impatient Wilkes waited until he discerned the British flag flying from her masthead, then fired a shot at her. There was no result, but a shell across her bow brought her to. A lieutenant and several other officers, accompanied by a number of marines, boarded her and demanded her papers and a list of the passengers and crew. The British captain indignantly refused the demand, but Mason and Slidell announced themselves and were at once seized, despite the protests of the captain and of a commander of the royal navy in charge of the mails.

Wilkes had ordered his lieutenant to seize the ship if Mason and Slidell were on board, but his orders were only partly obeyed. The *Trent* was allowed to proceed on her way and Mason and Slidell were put on board the *San Jacinto,* which put in for coal at Hampton Roads, where a telegram was at once dispatched to the Secretary of the Navy.

The populace was overjoyed at the news. Wilkes became a great hero. In Boston a banquet was arranged in his honor. New York gave him a public reception in the City Hall, with

a formal welcome by the mayor. "Your conduct," Secretary Welles wrote him officially, "was marked by intelligence, ability, decision and firmness, and has the emphatic approval of this department." When Congress met the House thanked him for his "brave, adroit and patriotic conduct." At the same session it also adopted resolutions that Mason and Slidell, now in Fort Warren, should be confined in felons' cells and receive the same sort of treatment that Colonel Michael Corcoran and Colonel Alfred M. Wood, made prisoners at the battle of Bull Run, had received at the hands of "rebel authorities."

Lincoln was depressed by the news of the capture. "I fear," he said, "that the traitors will prove to be white elephants. We must stick to American principles concerning the rights of neutrals. We fought Great Britain for insisting by theory and practice on the right to do precisely what Captain Wilkes has done." Fearful of public opinion he did not, however, obey his first impulse and disregarded the advice which Sumner gave him in a private letter "to act on the case at once and to make the surrender in conformity with our best precedents."

Feeling, meanwhile, ran high in England. "The newspapers," Charles Francis Adams wrote, "roll out as much fiery lava as Vesuvius is doing daily. The clubs, and the army, and the navy, and the people on the streets generally, are raving for war."

The press spared no efforts in whipping up public sentiment against the United States. The London *Times* denounced Wilkes as "but too faithful a type of the people in whose foul mission he is engaged. He is an ideal Yankee. Swagger and ferocity, built on a foundation of vulgarity and cowardice, these are his characteristics, and these are the most prominent marks by which his countrymen, generally speaking, are known all over the

world. To bully the weak, to triumph over the helpless, to trample on every law of country and custom, willfully to violate all the most sacred interests of human nature, to defy as long as danger does not appear, and, as soon as real peril shows itself, to sneak aside and run away—these are the virtues of the race which presumes to announce itself as the leader of civilization, and the prophet of human progress in these latter days. By Captain Wilkes let the Yankee breed be judged."

Lincoln came in for a great deal of censure. "Abraham Lincoln, whose accession to power was generally welcomed on this side of the Atlantic," said the *Morning Chronicle,* "has proved himself a feeble, confused and little-minded mediocrity. Mr. Seward, the firebrand at his elbow, is exerting himself to provoke a quarrel with all Europe. . . . If the Federal States could be rid of these mischief-makers it might yet redeem itself in the sight of the world; but while they stagger on at the head of affairs, their only chance of fame consists in the probability that the navies of England will blow out of the water their blockading squadrons, and teach them how to respect the flag of a mightier supremacy beyond the Atlantic."

The British government, however, found itself in a very embarrassing position. England herself had many and many a time done exactly what Captain Wilkes had done. She had once fought the United States over the very principle involved in the *Trent's* capture. In fact, the law officers of the Crown gave as their opinion that "according to the principles of international law laid down in our courts and practised by us, a belligerent has a right to stop and search any neutral not being a ship of war and suspected of carrying enemy's dispatches."

This opinion was partly suppressed. Times, it was pointed

out, had changed. This was an age of steam; new conditions demanded new precedents and, most potent argument of all, the Americans must be taught that the British Lion could not be insulted with impunity.

This was the opinion of Her Majesty and the Prince Consort, and on December 1st a messenger set out for Washington bearing a dispatch from the Queen, which declared that the seizure of Mason and Slidell was "an affront to the British flag and a violation of international law," and demanded the redress which alone would satisfy Her Majesty's government, restoration of the passengers and a suitable apology.

Great Britain now made ready for war. Troops were transported to Canada. Warships were equipped with cannon, rifles, ammunitions and stores. Twenty-five thousand muskets were taken from the Tower. Volunteers of the Royal Naval Reserve asserted their readiness to "protect the honor of our flag, our good Queen and country." The London *Times* declared that the Admiralty would soon have more than a thousand guns on the North Atlantic and West Indian stations. With his picked cruisers the Admiral could blockade the whole Federal force inside of a week, force the passage of the port of New York and dictate his own terms to the United States government.

In the midst of all the preparations Adams received a dispatch saying that the seizure of Mason and Slidell was unauthorized, that Seward awaited the demands of the British government, and that, if they were in the same spirit of good will with which his dispatch was sent, they would be promptly complied with.

The news was received with the wildest excitement in London. The *Jura,* sailing from Portland, with official dispatches

from Lord Lyons, reached Queenstown January 8th. The announcement that "the Americans had thought better of it" was made at the Drury Lane Theater that evening before the curtain rose. The audience burst into the national anthem as an expression of their delight. Similar scenes were enacted in other theaters of the city, and throughout England church bells were rung in celebration.

There were no such scenes in Boston, New York or Washington. Lincoln for once had misread, or failed to anticipate, public sentiment. During the time that had elapsed since the seizure of the commissioners sober second thought had asserted itself, and many Northerners were of the opinion that the government, by not forestalling the British demands, had allowed the United States to be unjustifiably humiliated. "It is gall and wormwood to me," Chase said in the Cabinet council. "Rather than consent to the liberation of these men I would sacrifice everything I possess."

Mason and Slidell, meanwhile, on board the British sloop-of-war *Rinaldo,* were making their way for the second time to St. Thomas, whence they sailed for Southampton early in the new year. The Confederacy had been without a representative in Europe between the end of Yancey's mission and their belated arrival in Europe, but they had consoled themselves during their imprisonment at Fort Warren with the knowledge that they were actually of more service to their country in their "felons' cells" than they could possibly be at large. Arrived at their destinations they now addressed themselves to the task of securing foreign recognition for the Confederacy.

Yancey, returning from Europe some months before, had intimated that their mission was hopeless. "You have no friends

in Europe," he had said, "and this is equally true of the North, whose people, government and press, and the writings of whose public men are believed to be utterly mendacious. The sentiment of Europe is anti-slavery, and that portion of public opinion which forms, and is represented by the government of Great Britain, is abolition. They will never recognize our independence until our conquering sword hangs dripping over the prostrate heads of the North. Their opinion of the character of the people of the South and the cause in which we are engaged is derived from Northern sources. They never see the journals and periodicals of the South. They believe we are a brave and determined people. But they would like to see the two confederacies crippled by the war, and so will give aid to neither. It is an error to say, 'Cotton is King.' It is not. It is a great and influential factor in commerce, but not its dictator. The nations of Europe will never raise the blockade until it suits their interests."

2

The new plan of sending a representative to each European power was certainly better than the old joint commission. Of the two men, Slidell, born in New York and brought up in New Orleans, was certainly better fitted to cope with the intricacies of Gallic diplomacy. It was a question then and it remains a question now whether Mason was the man to represent Confederate interests abroad. He was an experienced politician, but he was utterly unversed in international intrigue. Where the wily Benjamin would have cajoled he stiffened. An old-fashioned Virginian, proud and incorrigibly provincial, he is aptly described by the sprightly Mrs. Chesnut: "My wildest imagination

will not picture Mr. Mason as a diplomat. He will say 'chaw' for 'chew,' and he will call himself 'Jeems,' and he will wear a dress coat for breakfast. . . . They say the English will like Mr. Mason; he is so manly, so straightforward, so truthful and bold. 'A fine old English gentleman,' so said Russell (William Howard Russell of the London *Times*) to me, 'but for tobacco. I like Mr. Mason and Mr. Hunter better than anybody else. And yet they are wonderfully unlike.' 'Now you just listen to me,' said I. 'Is Mrs. Davis in hearing—no? Well, this sending Mr. Mason to London is the maddest thing yet. Worse in some points of view than Yancey, and that was a catastrophe.' "

The English did like Mason. He was well received in London society, entertained at various country houses and became intimate with many leading noblemen of the realm who sympathized warmly with the Confederate cause. His friendship with the Earl of Donoughmore and the Earl of Derby outlasted his mission. But though he was sustained by the outspoken sympathy of these peers he found it hard to brook Lord John Russell's coldly neutral attitude.

When Mason took up his duties in February matters seemed to be at a standstill, both as regards recognition and the repudiation of the blockade. Neither question was touched on when Parliament met. Members of Parliament, friendly to the Confederacy, assured Mason, however, that this was because the Ministry was not ready to take either step just then, and anxious not to be further embroiled with the United States until the excitement over the *Trent* affair had died down completely. The blockade would be taken up soon. Doubtless it would be repudiated, and when this was done, recognition of the Confederacy must speedily follow.

Mason bided his time until February 10th when he requested and received an interview with the Premier. In this interview he impressed upon his lordship the fact that the South was not primarily concerned with recognition. That, he said, was but a matter of time. The South, knowing her own strength and the temper of her people, was well content to wait. He wished his lordship to understand, however, that the separation was final; the South would, under no circumstances, ever again unite with the North in a common government. Lord Russell listened in silence until the Confederate commissioner had concluded his speech, asked a few questions and brought the interview to a speedy close. Mason, in a letter to Hunter, said that he left upon him "the impression that his personal sympathies are not with us, and his policy, inaction."

Mason doubtless showed diplomacy in making no specific demand of England at this time. He had, indeed, little but diplomacy to offer. He did not have the authority to beg or borrow money; he did not take it upon himself, as Slidell did, to offer a bribe large enough to stir the English to action. He had only high ideals and principles of government to set before the Premier of the most acquisitive nation on earth.

The British government was much more concerned with the blockade just then than with the recognition of the Confederacy. The blockade, Mason claimed, was not effective, and therefore, according to international law, should not be recognized by the European powers. The United States government, it was being said, had practically admitted as much, when in defiance of all international precedent it had ruined forever the Charleston harbor by sinking in the main channel the hulks of sixteen old whalers laden with stone.

Lord Russell had already had a great deal of correspondence with Lord Lyons over the blockade, and over the sinking of "Lincoln's stone fleet" as it was called. The indignant protests of the Ship-owners' Association of Liverpool had led him to write a note to Lyons characterizing the act as worthy only of barbaric times and a plot against the commerce of all nations. Seward, in his reply to Lord Lyons, had soothed the British somewhat by saying that it was not the intention of the United States government to block the port forever. The project was a military measure and the obstructions would be removed as soon as the Union was restored.

Lord Russell now wrote to Lyons making clear the position Her Majesty's government would take on the question of the blockade. If ships were stationed at the entrance of a port, he said, "sufficient really to prevent access to it, or to create an evident danger of entering or leaving it, and . . . these ships do not voluntarily permit ingress or egress, the fact that various ships may have successfully escaped" would not make the blockade ineffective according to international law.

Mason at once sent him a list of more than three hundred vessels, which, he claimed, had entered or left blockaded ports in the Confederacy. Soon after a member of Parliament moved for returns of the number of British vessels which had run the blockade during the last six months. There was much discussion of the matter in the House of Commons. W. E. Forster defended the blockade. Gregory, the staunch friend of the South, claimed that it was ineffective and insisted that the British government in recognizing it was departing from its attitude of strict neutrality.

The debate came in the end to nothing, but meanwhile the

blockade has tightened until there was now no question of its effectiveness. This left only the question of recognition. There were friends of the South ready to bring the matter before Parliament but Mason felt it inconsistent with the dignity of his government to make the demand for recognition unless he terminated his mission at once in case of refusal. This he was not ready to do. He therefore waited until the news of the Seven Days' battles and the retreat of McClellan to the James had reached England before he asked Russell for another interview. Russell refused, saying that he did not think any good could come of it. Mason replied, setting forth what he would have said had the interview been granted. It was impossible, he said, that the North could longer entertain hopes of subjugating the South or of forcing her back into the Union. The British government, by not recognizing the separation of the two countries, a separation, which in the settled judgment of Europe was final, was while professing strict neutrality actually offering the United States an incentive to prolong the war.

Lord John replied that Her Majesty's government was determined to wait until some decisive victory showed that the Confederacy had won her place among the nations of the world. That time, in his opinion, had not come.

The government's neutral attitude was not a reflection of popular opinion. Practically all classes in England took sides in the struggle. The governing classes were naturally in sympathy with the aristocratic slave-owning South, though it was generally thought regrettable that slavery was "the corner stone of the new edifice." The common people, led by Cobden and Bright, were convinced that the war was being fought for the abolition of slavery, and supported the North. Both classes hoped

that the war would soon be ended. The cotton famine was causing great distress all over England. Cottagers were unable to pay their rents. One quarter of the population was being supported by charity. Relief committees throughout the kingdom were kept busy forwarding coal, funds and clothing to the cotton operatives out of work. These men suffered the cruelest privation cheerfully, believing, ironically enough, that they were lending help in a war to abolish class privilege. It was, indeed, a war to abolish the privileges of one class only to set up the privileges of another.

The press now began to demand interference. Washington, not Richmond, was threatened, one journal pointed out. "How can we refuse to recognize that independence which is a fact? . . . What do we wait for? What do we require?"

"There is a degree of inhumanity in the attitude of European powers," said Lord Derby's organ, the London *Herald*. "We stand with arms folded while America is turned into a desert, and her people break each other to pieces. What advantage will it to be us to stand by and see the spirit of that country broken, and a whole generation of young men maimed or slain in the cruelest of unjust wars? Let us do something as we are Christian men. Call it arbitration, mediation, intervention, diplomatic action, recognition of the South, remonstrance with the North, friendly interference, forcible pressure, what you will, but let us do something to stop the carnage. Let us tell the Americans what we think of it and cry hold!"

Henry Hotze, an accredited agent of the Confederacy, was also exerting influence through a literary magazine called the *Index* whose aim was to "impress on the public mind abroad the ability of the Confederate States to maintain their independence," and to disseminate whatever other information the editor might

judge helpful. Hotze also wrote editorially and as a correspondent for the *Post,* the *Herald,* the *Standard,* and the *Market Review* and furnished information to leader writers anxious to have something to say on this, the burning question of the day. That he was not unsuccessful is shown by the fact that the Earl of Donoughmore told Mason in 1865 that a great many Englishmen had revised their opinion of slavery after becoming better acquainted with the customs and institutions of the South.

3

Mason had felt for some time that the Cabinet was only waiting for some victory more decisive than any that had yet been achieved to recognize the Confederacy, but when Lee retreated from Maryland after the battle of Antietam he settled down to another period of despondent waiting. His spirits were somewhat raised by Lincoln's proclamation threatening emancipation. He believed that Adams had prompted it to be issued as a means of heading off recognition, and he contemplated with pleasure the storm of protest that it raised all over England.

It was regarded by the British press as an act of high-handed usurpation which could have no legal force. Lincoln, it was said derisively, might as well have decreed that on and after January first debtors should cease to pay their creditors. The fact that the proclamation was a war measure was apparent to the British. The United States government, it was said, was freeing the enemy's slaves simply to weaken him, and it was shrewdly noted that the proclamation did not apply to the border states. "Where he has no power Mr. Lincoln would set the slaves free; where he has power he will consider them as slaves."

In October, the month when members of Parliament went about the country addressing their constituents, the Confederate cause received a powerful ally in Gladstone, then Chancellor of the Exchequer. In a speech at Newcastle he electrified his audience by saying:

"We may have our own opinions about slavery; we may be for or against the South; but there is no doubt that Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they have made more than either, they have made a nation. We may anticipate with certainty the success of the Southern states as far as their separation from the North is concerned."

His speech created a great commotion. Many people believed that it foreshadowed official recognition. Gladstone, a member of the Cabinet, would never have expressed himself so strongly if some course of action had not been determined upon. Business men wrote, complaining that he had misled the whole community. Russell rebuked him sharply. "You must allow me to say," he wrote, "that I think you went beyond the latitude which all speakers must be allowed, when you said that Jefferson Davis had made a nation. Recognition would seem to follow, and for that step I think the Cabinet is not prepared. However, we shall soon meet to discuss this very topic."

They met, again and again. There was much discussion, but matters remained at a standstill. Russell, however, had had a slight change of heart. He was now disposed to recognize the Confederacy, but he insisted as usual upon a policy of watchful waiting and favored an indirect method of recognition. He planned, in fact, to make the North dictate the British government of the South. "If the Great Powers of Europe," said he,

"were to offer their good offices, and those good offices were to be rejected by the North," Her Majesty's government would then be in a position to recognize the Confederacy whenever she chose. If peace were not made before next May he was "for recognizing the South. The Democratic Party may then have got the ascendancy. I heartily wish their success."

This might well represent the high tide of British sympathy for the Confederate cause, but Mason, worn out with hope long deferred, was discouraged rather than cheered by the Premier's attitude. It only confirmed what he had known all along, that England would never act except from self-interest. Recognition, upon which President Davis had so long pinned his hopes, might come, but it would come too late to be of any service to the Confederacy.

4

Slidell, in France, was laboring meanwhile to convince Napoleon III that it was to his interest to recognize the Confederacy. Slidell, already being spoken of as a second Benjamin Franklin, was perhaps the best man the Southerners could have chosen to represent them at the Court of France. His was a hard, realistic intelligence; he knew how to be bold, as he proved when the time came; he knew also when to yield. "There was in him," says his biographer, Louis Martin Sears, "a strange blending of the polished gentleman and cultivated man of the world with the mob-moving demagogue."

A journalist of the times, recording the Charleston convention of 1861, has left this description of him: "A gentleman with long, thin white hair, through which the top of his head blushes like the shell of a boiled lobster. The gentleman has also a cherry-

red face, the color being that produced by good health, and good living, joined to a florid temperament. His features are well cut, and the expression is that of a thoughtful, hard-working, resolute man of the world. He is a New Yorker by birth, but has made a princely fortune at the New Orleans bar. . . . His special mission here is to see that Stephen A. Douglas is not nominated for the Presidency. If I am not much mistaken, he just now manipulated a few Northeastern men with such marvelous art, that they will presently find that they are exceedingly anxious to defeat the nomination of Douglas, and they will believe that they arrived at the conclusion now coming uppermost in their minds in their own way."

Charm, Slidell undoubtedly had, and the ability to manipulate men. These he now brought to bear upon Napoleon III and his ministers. His mission, however, progressed slowly. He made little headway with M. Thouvenel, the minister of foreign affairs, but Persigny, the minister of the interior and a close friend of the Emperor's, was more cordial, and M. Baroche, the president of the council of state, was well disposed to Slidell because of hospitality extended to his son in New Orleans. It was July of 1862 before he had an interview with the Emperor himself. The interview lasted seventy minutes, and the Emperor, while noncommittal towards Slidell's demand for immediate recognition, talked "freely, frankly and unreservedly" and "spoke in most decided terms of his sympathy and his regret that England had not shared his views. . . . On the whole he left on my mind the impression that if England long persisted in her inaction, he would be disposed to act without her. . . ."

The two commissioners had agreed that a demand for recognition should be made simultaneously in England and France.

Mason, therefore, was at this time making similar demands of Lord John Russell, with what result we know. Slidell became a little irritated when the Premier continued to maintain that the "time had not come." "If the present moment be not opportune," he wrote Mason, "I can imagine no possible contingency short of recognition by Lincoln that will satisfy his lordship."

He suggested also to Mason that England was slow in moving because she desired to "see the North entirely exhausted and broken down . . . and they are willing in order to attain that object to suffer their own people to starve, and play the poltroon in the face of all Europe."

Slidell seems to have realized from the first that recognition of the Confederacy would have to be made worth while. One of the first things he did was to offer Napoleon a great bribe if he would break the blockade: French products were to be introduced into the Confederate states free of duty for a certain period of time, and to defray the cost of the naval expedition which would be necessary to open the blockaded ports Slidell pledged to deliver to France in specified Southern ports one hundred thousand bales of cotton, valued at about $12,500,000. This proposition, Napoleon said, "did not seem disagreeable to him."

Slidell was jubilant. "He will soon have a fleet in the neighborhood of our coast," he wrote, "strong enough to keep it clear of every Federal cruiser."

Napoleon, however, was never as good as his word. His tortuous advances came to be spoken of contemptuously in the South. "We want none of his *pourparlers* nor commissioners," the people said. "We have commissioners. They are Lee, Beauregard, Longstreet, Johnston."

Slidell, encouraged by Lee's victories, now made formal de-

mand for recognition. Thouvenel received the letter reluctantly and did not answer it officially, but sent a messenger to Slidell who said that the minister could not make a definite reply at present, and so preferred to keep silent unless Slidell insisted on an immediate answer. Slidell did not press the matter, convinced that the answer would be unfavorable. August wore on into September. The Emperor, returning from Biarritz, gave his attention to a plan for mediation. A joint mediation by England, France and Russia was at first proposed, but this having failed through Lord Russell's reluctance to act, Napoleon sent a dispatch to Mercier, his minister at Washington, asking if the United States could not accept the idea of informal conference with commissioners representing the Confederate states. The Emperor believed that by such a conference the belligerents might find that their interests were not irreconcilable.

Seward politely refused to consider such a proposal. The South, he said, would indignantly reject an offer of peace, with union. The people of the United States would as indignantly reject the idea of peace with disunion.

Napoleon's left hand now gave some real aid to the Confederacy. While he was making his offer of mediation he was signing papers which allowed the building of Confederate warships in his ports. A Nantes firm undertook the building of two corvettes "for commerce in Chinese waters" and work went forward swiftly.

Slidell's hopes were again high. He had begun to put some faith in the Emperor's professions of sympathy. Besides, he received encouragement from other sources. Mrs. Slidell came of a Creole family that had influential connections in France, and the Slidells, as a matter of course, took their place in the *beau*

monde. While Slidell pondered over the problems and probable fate of the Confederacy his sons and daughters diverted themselves hunting the wild boar or stag with the packs of the Duc d'Aumale and Prince de Joinville and the Marquis de Lubersac. He himself went often to the Empress's receptions. "She received Mrs. S. and the girls most graciously," he wrote Mason. "At these parties men are not presented to her but at her request. On both occasions she sent for me. . . . She is perfectly well posted about our affairs. . . . She sympathizes most warmly with our cause and so expresses herself without any reserve. I mention these facts because the Empress is supposed, I believe with truth, to exercise considerable influence in public affairs."

Now, just as Lee was making his advance into Maryland, came the floating of the Confederate Cotton Loan. "I have been quite surprised," Slidell wrote Mason, "at an uninvited suggestion on the part of a respectable banking house of a disposition to open a credit to our government of a considerable amount . . . the basis to be cotton delivered to the parties making the advance at certain ports in the interior."

"The respectable banking house" turned out to be Erlanger and Company, "one of the richest and most enterprising banking houses in Europe, having extensive business relations throughout Europe and free access to some very important men about the Court."

Slidell had no authority to borrow money—Davis seems to have been consistently indifferent to the advantage which a large credit would have given the South—but with characteristic boldness he accepted the proposition and at once set about arranging the terms of the loan. As finally consummated it called for £3,000,000 in seven per cent bonds at 77 per cent, "convertible

into cotton at 6d. delivered within six months after peace at a port."

Adams regarded with intense dissatisfaction this establishment of a credit which must be of enormous aid to the hard-pressed Confederacy. There were other things going on in England at this time that gave him acute concern. Her Majesty's government was adhering to its policy of strict neutrality, but it was apparently unaware that most of the ships that were making the Confederate navy so formidable were built and "equipped" in England.

One of these vessels, the *Enrica,* set out one morning from Liverpool, on a trial trip, with a party of invited guests aboard. In the afternoon the guests were sent back on a tug, and the *Enrica,* having taken aboard a crew of forty men, set sail for the Bay of Praya in the Island of Terceira, where her armament was put on board and the Confederate flag raised. She later became the *Alabama,* the famous commerce destroyer, which under the command of Raphael Semmes circumnavigated half the globe, and terrorized New England by burning a whole whaling fleet.

There was also the case of the *Sumter,* which after being blockaded at Gibraltar by three United States cruisers, was bought at auction by Frazier, Trenholm and Company, a sale, Adams said, which merely allowed her the protection of the British flag until she was ready for fresh depredations against the United States. Events proved he was right. She made her escape one stormy night, reached Liverpool, and sailed from there for Nassau, where she began her famous cruise which resulted in the capture of eighteen merchantmen.

Adams, aided by the indefatigable Dudley, United States Consul at Liverpool, finally collected so much evidence of the

building and equipping of these cruisers and rams that the British government was no longer able to ignore it. Lord Russell, therefore, sent a letter to Lord Lyons requesting him to convey to Mr. Davis "the formal protest and remonstrance of Her Majesty's Government against the efforts of the so-called Confederate states to build war vessels within Her Majesty's dominions to be employed against the Government of the United States."

"Her Majesty's Government," the letter read, "in taking this course, desire Mr. Davis to rest assured that it is adopted entirely in that spirit of neutrality which has been declared the policy of this country with regard to the two belligerents now so lamentably desolating America, and which will continue to be pursued with a careful and earnest desire to make it conducive to the most rigid impartiality and justice."

Davis's reply, transmitted through his secretary, Burton Harrison, was haughty and characteristically undiplomatic. "The President," Harrison wrote, "desires me to say to your Lordship that . . . it would be inconsistent with the dignity of the position he fills, as Chief Magistrate of a nation comprising a population of more than twelve millions, occupying a territory many times larger than the United Kingdom, and possessing resources unsurpassed by those of any other country on the globe—to allow the attempt of Earl Russell to ignore the actual existence of the Confederate States, and to contumeliously style them 'so-called' to pass without a protest and a remonstrance. The President, therefore, does protest and remonstrates against this studied insult; and he instructs me to say, that in future any document in which it may be repeated will be returned unanswered and unnoticed.

"With respect to the subject of the extract from Earl Russell's

despatch, the President desires me to state, that the plea of neutrality, which is used to sustain the sinister course of Her Majesty's Government against the Government of the Confederate States, is so clearly contradicted by their actions, that it is regarded by the world, not even excepting the United States, as a mere cover for hostility, and the President cannot but feel that this is a just view of it. . . . He cannot but feel that a neutrality most cunningly, audaciously, fawningly and insolently sought and urged, begged and demanded by one belligerent, and repudiated by the other, must be seen by all impartial men to be a mere pretext for aiding the cause of the one at the expense of the other, while pretending to be impartial; to be, in short, but a cover for treacherous, malignant hostility.

"As for the specious argument on the subject of the rams, advanced by Earl Russell, the President desires me to state that he is content to leave the world and history to pronounce judgment upon this attempt to heap injury upon insult, by declaring that Her Majesty's Government and law officers are satisfied of the questions involved, while those questions are still before the highest legal tribunal of the kingdom, composed of members of the Government, and the highest law officers of the Crown, for their decision. The President himself will not condescend to notice them."

It is evident that Davis, by this time, had little hope from England. Mason, however, hoped on to the end. Not so the more realistic Slidell. He saw clearly that recognition by Europe, even if it could be secured, would be of little advantage now, and he was heartily tired of the intrigues which from the first had beset his mission: "I find it very difficult to keep my temper amidst all this double dealing. . . . This is a rascally world and it is

most hard to say who can be trusted." Later, on July 17th, 1864, he wrote: "The time has now arrived when it is of comparatively little importance what Queen or Emperor may say or think about us. A plague I say on both your houses."

CHAPTER VII

GETTYSBURG, AND THE MILITARY CRISIS

I

THE trouble brewing in the West at the end of 1862 was remotely the fault of Davis himself—the fault of the dispersive departmental system under which a commander in one place might be hard pressed but powerless to call for aid from another officer standing idle fifty miles away. Davis's bureaucratic habits, lingering on from the old War Department, had been originally to blame; but as the war went on apace and Davis, with warlike ambitions, saw little war, he felt some jealousy of his nominal title of commander-in-chief of all the Confederate armies; and he carefully saw to it that no one commander got too much power. Even Lee commanded only a department. But the Department of the West was larger and more important than that of Northern Virginia, and much farther from Richmond; and what it needed was a general with independent power who could transfer troops without Davis's consent and practically conduct an independent campaign. Davis saw this necessity; but whether it was unwillingness to meet it in any case, or the lack of a general whom he trusted, that stayed his hand, it is hard to say. At this point the influence of Seddon begins to be felt, and it was wonderful that a Virginian alone saw the overwhelming importance of the West, and tried to solve its problem.

By the middle of November, 1862, Joseph E. Johnston, who had been wounded at Seven Pines some months before, said that he was ready for service, and Seddon persuaded Davis to send him to the West and to give him the control of the Army of Tennessee, under Bragg, and the Army of Mississippi, under Pemberton. These forces had so far acted without concert, and disaster in the West had seriously detracted from the importance of Lee's victories in the East. Johnston was one of the three or four best soldiers in the South; but he tended to avoid assuming responsibility; he was touchy and quarrelsome—another dyspeptic; and his instinctive dislike of offensive warfare had, inconsistently enough, undermined the President's confidence in him since his retreat up the peninsula before McClellan in the spring. In the end, Davis's lack of confidence may have been sheer dislike; Johnston had not handled him, in his rancorous letters, with kid gloves. So, when Johnston went west his instructions were a little vague; they should have been full and explicit, for otherwise a general who hated responsibility would be cautious and timid, fearing that disaster would be charged to him if he exceeded the letter of his orders. Seddon had got Johnston appointed but he could not get Davis to give him unlimited power. The result was that Johnston used less power than he really had, and the Confederacy, in the West, soon found itself between the devil of Johnston and the deep blue sea of Davis.

The first week in December Davis set out for the West, arriving in Chattanooga on the ninth. There he had a conference with Johnston, the two chief subjects of which were Bragg's fitness for his command and the question of reinforcements for Pemberton's army, which was sorely threatened by an expedition of Grant who was now beginning his operations against Vicks-

burg. Johnston supported Bragg in spite of the wholesale disaffection of his officers and men—Cheatham said he would not serve under him—because he dreaded taking the command himself. But he urged that Pemberton's reinforcements be sent from Holmes's army of 30,000 men in Arkansas, which under incompetent leadership was soon to be frittered away: Holmes's department, called magnificently the Trans-Mississippi, was inviolable, and Davis instead of sending Holmes an order offered only a suggestion, which, of course, was not heeded. The President then went to Murfreesboro to see Bragg's army and to decide whether the reinforcements could be sent from it. The results of his decision will soon appear.

He returned from Murfreesboro to Chattanooga, and telegraphed to Seddon: "Found troops in good condition and fine spirits. Enemy is kept close to Nashville, and *indicates only defensive purposes.*" (Italics mine.) The Federal General Rosecrans indicated only defensive purposes until 10,000 men had been sent from Bragg to Pemberton reducing Bragg to 33,000 to his own 40,000; then he swiftly took advantage of the situation to march with all speed upon Murfreesboro.

Meanwhile Davis and Johnston went to Vicksburg to inspect the fortifications and to form a plan of action. No conclusion was arrived at. At Vicksburg there was a garrison of about 6,000 men, and another of 6,000 at the only other Confederate stronghold on the river, Port Hudson; Pemberton's army had about 40,000; here were more than 50,000 men who, concentrated, would have made a larger army than the force that Grant was bringing against them. United with Holmes, Pemberton—if he had possessed the ability—could have taken the offensive against Grant. But Davis did not feel like interfering with Johnston; and be-

yond the request for Holmes's army Johnston did not wish to upset the *status quo*. He was contented to let two incompetent generals blunder away. After the initial error of weakening Bragg's army, Davis's responsibility for the disasters of the summer of 1863 in the West ceases; Johnston's begins.

From Vicksburg the President went to Jackson, where he received a most enthusiastic welcome; he made a great speech. He would have done well to make more speeches, to take more trips. He constantly forgot that the Confederacy was a political experiment, and that the people were not fixed forces to be called into action by executive order; they needed to be coaxed and coddled; and he deprived them of the kind of public performance that they most loved—oratory from their leaders. In no sense was Davis ever the leader of the Southern people as a whole, and this was due to his complete lack of demagoguery, to his high opinion of the public intelligence. He sincerely expected the populace to understand the high motives of his close application to the details of office. But his infrequent public appearances had great effect, and more work of that kind, and less attention to the claims of Captain Jones or of Lieutenant Smith for some obscure command, would have done much to save the South. Disloyalty and despair, even at this early date, were rife in Tennessee and north Alabama; but instead of meeting this disaffection sympathetically Davis could only issue proclamations holding it up to shame. The Confederacy was already suffering from a lack of popular leadership, for Davis's conception of his office—since he had not won it by political chicanery—contained no idea of indebtedness to the mere good will of the fickle mob. He was steadfast; why should not the mob be steadfast too? The armies were too vast and too scattered for him to control them

effectively, and he made little effort to win the people; so in the end he did neither.

From Jackson he went to Mobile—where he was again cheered and praised. Then he returned to Richmond, discouraged and worn out. Two days after his arrival, he was "serenaded" (January 5th, 1863) at the Confederate "White House" on East Clay Street, by "Captain J. B. Smith's Silver Band, the affair having been gotten up as a compliment to the President, on the occasion of his return from the West." Davis responded with a gracious impromptu address of gratitude for the ovation, which did not fail to impress him in the midst of his woes. In the almost morbid sensitivity of his isolation he was genuinely thankful for the kindness of the Richmond people, and he was not unaware of the effect that his aloofness had been making on the public mind: "My friends, constant labor in the duties of office, borne down by care, and with anxiety which has left me with scarcely a moment of repose, I have had but little opportunity for social intercourse among you. . . . I can only give this as my excuse for my seldom appearance among you." When he ceased speaking the band played "The Mocking Bird" and "Dixie," and Davis retired—to be confined to his house very nearly to the end of February, with that curse of the neurotic temperament —neuralgia, which had again afflicted him amid the hardships of a journey on the broken-down Confederate railroads.

While the President was still in Mobile, Rosecrans was continuing his march from Nashville to Murfreesboro to attack Bragg in his weakened condition. On December 31st the two armies clashed, both generals taking the aggressive at the same time; but the Confederates, fighting with a valor and a ferocity unsurpassed in the war, crushed the right wing of the Federals,

and gained the upper hand. Thereupon Bragg, demoralized as usual, settled down for a wait of two days, during which Rosecrans restored his lines; the second Confederate attack was repulsed. The Confederates, well knowing they were ill-led, threw themselves headlong against the strong Union position, and lost 10,000 men out of 33,000; the water in Stone's River ran red with blood. A great victory had been thrown away; for Bragg had to retreat to Tullahoma to a weaker position where it was difficult to keep the army supplied.

The battle of Murfreesboro alone is enough to refute the belief that the western Southern armies were inferior to those of the east; they were as well-organized—and for this Bragg deserves credit, and Pillow, the conscript officer, too, in spite of his faults, for having given Bragg 10,000 conscripts—and they were as well-equipped. On the whole, the quality of the men was better than in the East. The sturdy pioneer type had not disappeared in the West, and there were whole regiments of the "tall men," the six-footers, from Mississippi and Tennessee. They fought as bravely and as devotedly as the men of Lee, and if they accomplished less it was because they had no Lee at their head.

The dissatisfaction of the army with Bragg's leadership reached its climax immediately after the battle of Murfreesboro. He blamed his officers for his failure, and threatened to courtmartial General Polk, who under the circumstances had actually done his duty to the fullest. But the intense dislike of Bragg could not be ignored, even by Bragg himself; and he now did what no leader can ever afford to do and retain his prestige. He called his subordinates together—the subordinates whom he had recently blamed—and asked them to vote on his competence to command

an army! Generals have always called councils of war, they have taken advice; but never before or since has an officer displayed such weakness of character. The proceedings alone, even without the subordinates' verdict, stamped him as unfit for his office. The subordinates voted that he had lost their confidence and the confidence of the army as a whole.

In the face of this Davis could not sustain Bragg any longer. He had Seddon telegraph Johnston to relieve Bragg and to take command of his army in person. Seddon had been working all along for Bragg's removal, and his success witnesses the extent of his influence with the President. Bragg was Davis's close personal friend, and while he would permit some one else to remove him, he would not do it himself. He passed the responsibility on to Seddon and Johnston, and Seddon left it entirely to Johnston as the head of the department. Seddon wished to give Johnston a chance to invigorate the enfeebled cause of the West, but he reckoned without Johnston's eccentricity and unwillingness to take the chance. At one point in Johnston's controversy with the War Department he asserted that to take Bragg's army away from him would be "inconsistent with his personal honor."

2

Johnston was, in fact, so unwilling to take the field that his health, never actually good, became steadily worse, and his nice sense of honor mounted in scrupulousness to a fantastic degree. When he received Seddon's order to relieve Bragg, he hastened to Tullahoma, only to find that unpopular general at the bedside of his wife, who was reported to be very ill; Johnston's delicacy would not permit him to deliver the dismissal at such a time. He

did inspect the army and he did have conferences with the higher officers, who must have spoken their minds; but what he reported to Seddon probably gave that shrewd and hopeful war minister a shock. Johnston said that the condition of the army was good; that Polk and Hardee had no confidence in their superior; that Cheatham swore that he would not fight another battle under him; and that Governor Harris, of Tennessee, advised Bragg's removal. Johnston's own opinion was astonishing. He said that Bragg's conduct at the battle of Murfreesboro had been energetic and skillful, and that there was no ground for removing him.

Davis has been blamed for the blunders in the West, and he must take his share of the blame, but Johnston's share, in 1863, is by far the larger. Davis had washed his hands of the problem of Bragg, and left it solely up to the commander of the department; it was not his fault that Johnston persisted in praising a man whom all men knew to be incompetent. Davis could not afford to overstep Johnston's opinion and remove Bragg, even had he desired to do so, for Bragg would have had only too just a reason for complaint. Johnston, however, was suffering from his old wound, and we shall never know just how unfit he was for active service. The mystery, the wholly inexplicable part of Johnston's conduct, was not so much his own dislike of taking the field; it was his refusal to let anybody else take Bragg's place. Polk was far abler than Bragg, and so was Hardee; so were Cleburne and Cheatham, only division commanders. There was Forrest—not once considered; nor does Jackson's name appear in all the extensive correspondence on the issue.

Seddon was baffled and Davis was deeply anxious; there seemed to be nothing that they could do. At this time Johnston recited his woes to Senator Wigfall, Davis's recently acquired

enemy, who was glad to listen. He complained that he had no real power, that his two armies were so far separated that he could command neither, and that the success of either army would be credited to its immediate general, while failure in both places would be charged to him. His first instructions had, of course, been vague; now Seddon wrote him definitely that his powers were great, then he wrote him a second time. Johnston would not hear—because he did not want to. On the 12th of February he again extolled Bragg; and as late as the second week in April, when the war clouds were getting decidedly black, he repeated that he was still too ill to serve in the field, and that Bragg should be retained. There was nothing to be done, and the most important army of the Confederacy, the army intended to keep the Confederacy from being cut in two, was left in the hands of an officer who would have done well to command a brigade under Lee. The President was beginning to feel his old lack of confidence in Johnston, and he began to distrust Seddon because Johnston was his man. But Bragg was not the sole object of criticism, nor was he the sole obstacle in the way of Southern success in the West.

As the spring advanced and Grant's maneuvers round Vicksburg grew more menacing, the army of Mississippi, commanded by General John C. Pemberton, became the strategic center of the war because control of the Father of Waters was indispensable to the ultimate success of either side: Pemberton, another favorite of the President's, was even more incompetent than Bragg. But he was not so great a favorite, and Johnston certainly had the authority to remove him. Davis has been misjudged: it has been said that he should have removed Bragg and, particularly, Pemberton; but it is forgotten that Johnston constantly defended

them both. Davis was simply failing to do what he has so often been charged with doing—overruling a commander on the scene of action. He took Johnston at his word. This word was not equivocal; Johnston, in March, congratulated Pemberton on the skill of his operations against Grant, presumably because he himself was glad that he was not engaging in operations against anybody; and yet his opinion of Pemberton, expressed later, was actually very low. Seddon, and Davis, too, had pleaded with Johnston time and again to take command at Vicksburg in person; he invariably gave his excuse—illness.

He complained—much more plausibly—that both of the armies in his department were too small to keep back the enemy and to reinforce each other, and he kept demanding troops from the west side of the Mississippi that were either idle or much nearer Pemberton than Bragg away off in Tennessee. But Davis, faced with the most critical of disasters, would not violate the highly unnatural boundary of a "department," and the troops from the Trans-Mississippi never came. He could never overcome his deep, emotional preference for the defensive dispersal of his troops, and now, as always, there was at least a show of reason for this policy. The Federals were constantly making raids into the interior, and the people were demanding protection—the kind of protection that they could see with their own eyes, in their villages; not the less tangible but more enduring defense of the far-away battlefield. They demanded protection of property—chiefly cotton piled high along the rivers; cotton that they were forbidden by the government, for the good of the cause in Europe, to sell. Davis therefore kept large detachments in Louisiana and Arkansas that should have strengthened the main armies. This was part of the Federal strategic plan: to weaken the

main Confederate armies so that they would be easy prey in the main design—the capture of the defenses of the Mississippi River.

3

In spite of the lack of effective leadership for all the armies, the outlook for the spring of 1863 seemed to be better than it had been the year before. In the whole theater of war the Federals had not gained ground since April, 1862; indeed, they had lost a little. Richmond was safe, and the Confederates had reëstablished a foothold in Tennessee; Arkansas was still disputed ground, although Missouri was gone forever. The Southern armies were larger, better equipped, and, on the whole, better officered. To offset these advantages, the troops were scattered. Lee's army in Virginia had no bearing on the activity of other armies; Bragg's and Pemberton's armies formed a distinct but not very cohesive department; there was a separate department at Mobile; another at Charleston under Beauregard; still others, quite distinct from one another, in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. All these forces depended for coöperation upon the harried executive in Richmond, who was often of necessity ignorant of their problems and needs.

The country, besides, had been restless all winter, and the government did not know how to get what it wanted without ruffling the feelings of the people. Confederate money was going to the bad; merchants began to refuse it; food became hard to get, though there was an increasing plenty of it. The railroads were breaking down under the strain of war; materials of upkeep, hitherto imported from the North, could not be replaced. The government now resorted to a "tax in kind," an impressment

of farm-produce for the army; the farmers retaliated by raising only enough for home use. The planters were urged to leave off growing tobacco and cotton, and to grow food-stuffs: Toombs was enraged at this interference from the central government, and planted his usual amount of cotton. The government agencies of all kinds were feebly organized and administered—the Southerners were not good business men—and the public, unlike the modern Americans, were fiercely opposed to all forms of outside control. A magnetic leader might have cajoled the Southern people into even greater sacrifices than those they made spontaneously; but Davis could not spare the time from the duties of a commander of many armies. The Lower South, the heart of the Southern movement, began to feel that it was ignored.

Confederate history is too complex to be explained by simple, isolated causes that seem to bring on effects, but there are moments that, had they been different, might have changed the whole future: in the first week in May one of these decisive moments appeared. Grant had transferred his army to the east bank of the Mississippi and was driving Pemberton towards the fortifications of Vicksburg. No reinforcements could be sent to Pemberton from Bragg, and the situation was critical.

Grant, at this time, only slightly outnumbered Pemberton, and Johnston, who was collecting about 15,000 men at Jackson, Mississippi, ordered Pemberton to fall back and unite with him. The united forces, under an able commander—for Johnston was extremely able—stood a good chance to crush Grant once and for all. Pemberton, for reasons that were neither interesting nor good, decided to disobey the order. If anything ever decides anything else, this act—among others—decided the fate of the Con-

federacy. For Pemberton not only disobeyed Johnston's order to concentrate with him; he did not even concentrate his own force. Grant fell upon his divisions in detail; defeated them; and Pemberton, cut off from Johnston, fled to the defenses of Vicksburg, where Grant promptly bottled him up. The Federal army soon increased to 72,000 men, against about 30,000 Confederates, and Johnston's small force was powerless to raise the siege. It should be observed that even now Johnston did not remove Pemberton. The next act of the drama promised to be tragedy, but before it was enacted there were stirring scenes on another wing of the stage.

4

In Virginia, after the battle of Fredericksburg, Lee had gone to Richmond, where he was assured by the President that the end of the war was in sight: the slaughter of the Union troops in that struggle had greatly depressed the North, for though in the fall the invasions of Maryland and Kentucky had failed, the Union had not won a victory in the field since Shiloh, nine months before. But the winter passed; Lincoln kept up the war; and Europe did nothing to stop it.

By April, 1863, the situation in Virginia, though more hopeful than it had been the year before, was difficult. A large detachment from Lee's army under Longstreet was off in Suffolk uselessly besieging that town and gathering supplies for the main army. The expedition was a concession to the Confederate commissary, to which Lee unwisely consented: it left Lee with barely 60,000 men to oppose about 113,000, "the finest army on this planet," under General Joseph Hooker, who had replaced Burnside and reorganized his army. The two armies still faced

each other on the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg, and Hooker was to advance upon Richmond, while Grant, performing his part of the grand strategy, captured Vicksburg. On the last day of April Hooker started to move; his plan was to hold Lee's army at Fredericksburg with about half of his own, which was nearly equal to the whole of Lee's, and with the other half march to Lee's rear, cut off his retreat to Richmond, and crush him as in a vise. The plan was perfect—on paper; but it took no account of Lee and Jackson.

They quickly upset Hooker's plan by taking the offensive themselves, bringing on the battle of Chancellorsville. Leaving only a small detachment to feint at Fredericksburg, they marched eighteen miles westward to meet Hooker in the famous and difficult Spotsylvania wilderness. In the presence of 70,000 men Lee divided his fewer than 50,000, and on May 2nd sent Jackson to the right flank and rear of Hooker. Jackson, at the height of his career, moved like lightning upon Hooker, crushed his right wing and routed it. Night came on and Jackson fell, mortally wounded by his own men in the tangled woods.

In the next two days Lee completed the victory, which has been called the "tactical masterpiece of the nineteenth century"; but victory was not the destruction which Jackson was at the point of achieving; and the Federal army retreated, soon to be powerful as ever. Yet the Federal offensive in the East had been thrown back, and the Confederates had the initiative. It remained to see what they would be able to do with it.

While Jackson was dying the "burthen of Mr. Davis's regret was that he was helpless to serve or comfort him in any way. . . . We kept a servant at the telegraph office to bring the latest news. . . . 'How is he? Is he better?' . . . the body was brought

down wrapped in a handsome flag that Mr. Davis had sent for the purpose . . . the cortège moved to the Governor's house. There we had a last look at the patriot saint. . . . A tear dropped on the face as Mr. Davis leant over the dead hero; and when a man came to the mansion and attempted to talk some business matter to him, he remained silent for a while and then said: 'You must excuse me. I am still staggering from a dreadful blow. I cannot think.'" Part of the blow was doubtless the realization that he had neglected one of the greatest soldiers of all time.

The loss of Jackson was not only irreparable; it made the next campaign, unwisely conceived, sure to fail. The battle of Chancellorsville, triumph that it was, eliminated Jackson and made inevitable, because the triumph was partial, the invasion of Pennsylvania. Lee could not afford to let the upper hand go unimproved, and he drew to his support the main attention of the War Department, while the vastly more important problem of Vicksburg was left to its own solution.

In the middle of May Davis gave his consent to the Northern invasion, but four days later, the 19th, he heard of Pemberton's defeat and his flight to Vicksburg. Grant's army had looted "Brierfield," and Grant himself was riding one of the famous Davis horses. Because he had confidence in Lee's ultimate success, Davis had patriotically sacrificed his own interest and his own people. The news from Pemberton, however, called for consideration, and on May 26th Davis convened the most momentous Cabinet meeting in the history of the Confederacy. All day and into the night the members of the Cabinet discussed the military crisis.

Davis, ill, tired, austere, said little. Benjamin entered suavely

into the talk; Memminger, who knew nothing of war, looked nervous and out of place; Mallory had little to say. Seddon, the fiery corpse, led the discussion, opposed by Reagan, the Postmaster General from the West, who argued passionately for the defense of Vicksburg. But the Cabinet had already made up its mind to support Lee and to stake everything on Lee's invasion of the North. Until a few weeks before, Seddon had continued to support Johnston's demands from the West; but now Chancellorsville had changed the outlook; defensive war had failed, and at last here was the chance for an overwhelming offensive, which should have been undertaken in 1861. Lee was more powerful than he had been after Second Manassas. Everywhere, in spite of the siege of Vicksburg, the Confederate hope was high, and in spite of deficient strategy there was a great chance for success.

Reagan was still not satisfied, and he went to the President again. For once Davis was pleasant in the presence of opposition; as a Westerner he sympathized with Reagan's anxiety. But there was nothing he could do: Lee had suddenly thrown off his respectful acquiescence in executive opinion and asserted himself; this and the solid front of the Cabinet had convinced Davis that Lee was right. But the Southern people never knew that the Cabinet meeting had been held, and they blamed Davis for everything that went wrong in the summer of 1863.

What Reagan and Davis, and Seddon for a time, wished to do was to have Lee threaten Hooker and send powerful reinforcements to Johnston, who would presumably have driven Grant from Vicksburg and raised the siege. But would Johnston, the Fabius of modern times, have attacked Grant? It is doubtful. Nor would Bragg have done better: a large army—as we shall

soon see—only permitted him to blunder in a larger way. Nevertheless, had a competent officer, an aggressive one, been available in the West, the concentration of a large army there was the soundest strategy. Lee was the man; but he never saw the war as a whole: *he was fighting for Virginia.* He would not go; nor would he let his fine army be dismembered to be dissipated in the West. Under Bragg, the reinforcements from Lee would only have crippled the latter, without enabling Bragg to do what would have been expected of him. This seems to have been Lee's view; so far as it went, it was sound. But Lee should have gone to the West himself. Longstreet proposed to Lee the transfer of a great part of the Army of Northern Virginia to Tennessee for an invasion of Ohio under Lee: an army of 100,000 men could have been formed. It would have broken, at the first threat, Grant's operations at Vicksburg. Richmond might have fallen to Hooker, but that city had small strategic value, and the loss of prestige would have been more than balanced by the cutting of the North in two and by the panic of the Northern population. The Confederacy, truly medieval in war as it was feudal in society, had blind faith in the value of capitals, of fortified cities. Lee believed that his march to Pennsylvania would force Grant to send men from his army to the East: not a man came.

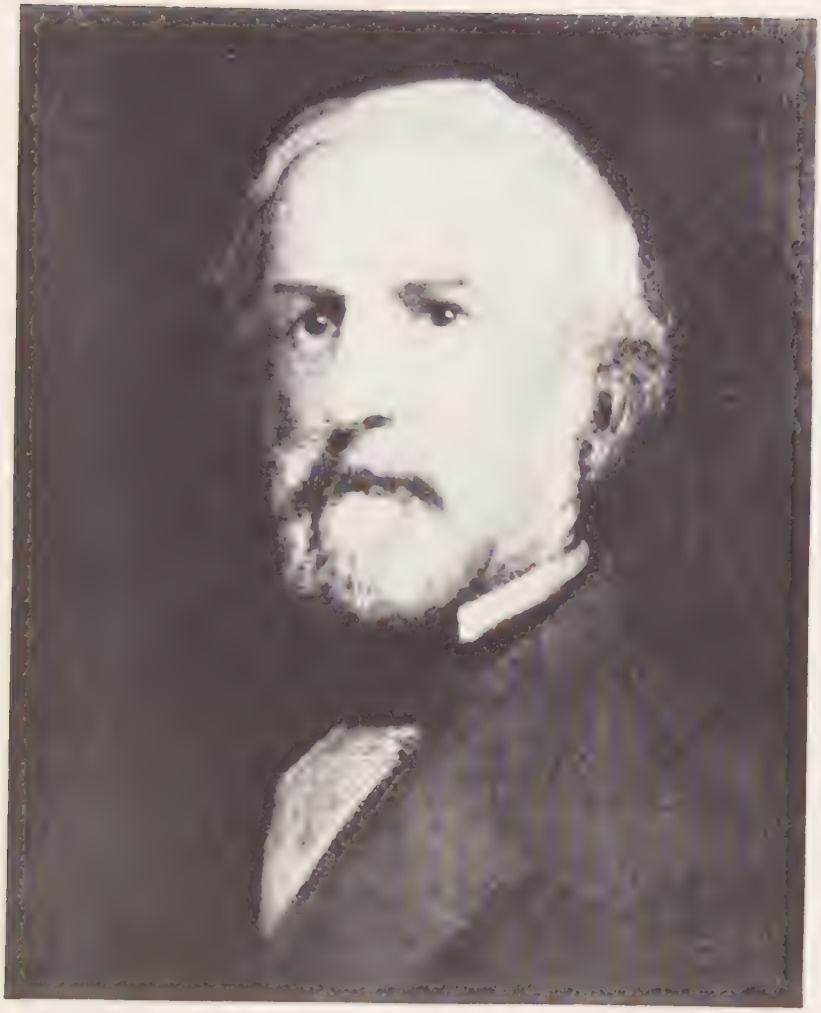
5

Early in June Lee set his army in motion for the Shenandoah Valley, so as to enter Pennsylvania west of the Blue Ridge, a barrier between him and the Union army. Since the death of Jackson the Army of Northern Virginia had been reorganized in three corps under Longstreet, Ewell, and Ambrose Hill, for

Lee was not willing to trust a new officer with as large a body of men as Jackson had commanded. While the army was moving, there occurred a great cavalry battle at Brandy Station, Virginia, on the 9th of June; it ended drawn; and the result was ominous. It meant that Stuart was no longer definitely superior to the Union cavalry: as the war progressed the Union troops of all arms steadily improved, and the initial superior aptitude of the Confederates for war was an advantage that had been lost. The Army of the Potomac, but for leadership and organization, was now very nearly the equal of Lee's, and its superior numbers, not important up to this time, were beginning to be decisive.

In the last days of June Lee's army was all in Pennsylvania; Ewell had advanced as far as York, and threatened Harrisburg. Davis had failed to form a "skeleton army" between Richmond and Washington, as Lee had requested, because there were no available men in that department; Richmond might have been taken by a *coup de main;* but it was not. Davis, terribly anxious, tried to believe the hopeful dispatches from Vicksburg; in a momentary panic he warned Lee not to go too far away, then took the warning back. The absence of the "skeleton army" relieved Lincoln of anxiety for Washington, and permitted him to send the whole of Hooker's army after Lee. Hooker followed closely, but Lee, having permitted Stuart to indulge in a wild raid, knew little of the position of the Union army.

The first clash at Gettysburg was unforeseen, but by nightfall of July 1st it was obvious that a great battle could not be avoided. Lee had preferred to fight in the mountains, on the defensive; Longstreet had insisted upon it. But the advantage gained on July 1st, when two Federal corps were practically destroyed, decided Lee to follow up the first success. The Union



Robert E. Lee

Portrait by Cephas Thompson. Owned by General Cyrus Radford, by whose courtesy it is here reproduced for the first time.

army was strung out over thirty miles, while Lee was concentrated; he had, for the first time in the war, the opportunity to oppose smaller numbers. Longstreet was therefore ordered to crush the Union left flank at dawn of the 2nd. He argued and delayed till three-thirty that afternoon, when he had opposed to him a new Federal corps just arrived on the field; even at that he almost broke the Federal line.

Next day, partial success having been won, Lee determined to try again; though now his army of 75,000 men was opposed by the whole Federal army of 93,000 under General George Gordon Meade, a fine soldier who at the last moment had superseded Hooker. Again Lee ordered the attack to begin at dawn; again Longstreet, convinced it would fail, ensured its failure by putting off the attack till after three o'clock. This attack, known as Pickett's charge, was preceded by a tremendous artillery battle; and then the 14,000 Confederates—without support, though it was supposed to be there—marched with iron ranks across a mile of open ground through a veritable hell of musketry and canister-shot. They captured the first line, and came so near success that five thousand more men would have made it certain; at the critical moment the unsupported victors were overwhelmed. Lee has been blamed for taking such a great chance —the risk was enormous—and yet it is clear that the task was by no means impossible if ably carried out. Longstreet had simply flouted his orders. Lee had got used to Jackson, whose aggressive genius was eminently suited to the needs of Gettysburg. Lee said afterwards: "If I had had Stonewall Jackson at Gettysburg, I should have won a great victory."

If Lee's army had been larger and better supplied he need not have returned to Virginia; for Meade had merely fought him

to a standstill, and he was too weak to resume the campaign so far from his base; the victory for the Union was not tactical and overwhelming, as Union patriotism to this day makes it out to have been, but strategic. Meade, in fact, had been so badly shattered in holding his own that, like McClellan, he pursued Lee at a distance, and did not assume the offensive for the rest of the entire year. Late in the summer Lee himself became the aggressor again, but Meade maneuvered and did not fight.

Nevertheless, the Pennsylvania campaign, because Lee was compelled to retreat, was a dire disaster. And as if Calliope, in order to bring harmony into her designs, had specially decreed it, Vicksburg, on the 4th of July, the day Lee started back to Virginia, fell at last with a loss of 29,000 men. Even if Lee had won, Vicksburg would have fallen; and unless the foreign powers in case of Lee's success, had recognized the Confederacy, as they seemed prepared to do in June, the loss of Vicksburg would have more than offset any success that Lee might conceivably have won. Defeated both east and west, the South now entered upon a new phase, in which the offensive would never again be possible.

The failure of Lee's campaign had lost the Mississippi, the key to the whole military situation, without in the least benefiting Virginia: the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac were facing each other again, as they had faced each other for two years, and would face each other for another year to come. Lee was by no means disposed of, and Gettysburg, aside from the effect it had elsewhere, was not a decisive battle. Grant's victory at Vicksburg was the greatest won by either side in the four long years; it decided—"unless Providence took a reasonable view of the situation"—the course of the war. Vicksburg

was the high point of Grant's career; he conducted the siege with energy, perseverance, and skill; his opponent fought doggedly but without imagination; and Grant was never to perform so brilliantly again.

The only hope that Pemberton could have had, since Lee had refused to send any of his men or to come himself, was from Bragg. This would have meant the giving up of Tennessee and most of Alabama, and Johnston would not take the responsibility for the move. Nor would Davis order it; it was almost impossible for Davis to give up territory for any reason, until it was taken from him. He seems not to have had a clear idea of the small army under Johnston's command in Grant's rear: he believed, because he wished to believe, that Johnston alone could have raised the siege, and he blamed Johnston for the disaster at Vicksburg. Johnston blamed Davis for not ordering Bragg to Pemberton's relief. Both were to blame because neither would act. "Between them the catastrophe occurred," says Mr. Eckenrode, "just as a baseball drops to the ground between two hesitating fielders." The figure is perfect. In the absence of a coherent strategy energetically carried out, the South lost.

The strain upon Davis through May and June had not only made him ill; it had subtly impaired his capacity to take in the reality around him and to estimate events at their real value. In most of his telegrams and letters to the western front, at this time, one gets the sense of Davis putting more upon the will of God than God is ever willing to bear. There is an ultimate point, doubtless, in human affairs where God alone may act; but Davis had not reached that crisis in 1863; he was simply unable to make up his mind. His peculiarly inflexible mind—he had not learned anything since about 1843—could only fall into

perplexity when his rigid formulas did not bring success. And now the storm of recrimination—with which the Confederate air soon became thick—simply baffled him, and filled him with disgust at the pettiness of human nature: he could not see beyond it into the depths of the public mind, whose state he was able to describe, with an incredible intellectual scorn, as faithless and unpatriotic: there was little feeling for the very human confusion and dissatisfaction in a terrible crisis. The President was nervously prostrated.

Bragg, having watched the proceedings at Vicksburg with an evil and impatient eye, was not superlatively grateful for Johnston's unfailing support of his continued command, and now he turned on his benefactor. He had, naturally, opposed the Pennsylvania campaign, and now he wrote to Beauregard, who also had opposed it: "Failing to impress the idea on others who control, I was put strictly on the defensive. . . . " He was attacking Johnston, whom he no longer trusted, and he went on to say that Johnston was yielding ground in Mississippi when there was no need of it. The hatred that Bragg now conceived for Johnston was soon to overcloud the western sky; and it was to have powerful influence on the events of the coming year; for Bragg remained the close friend of Davis.

To Davis's mixed credit and censure, he did not repudiate a general simply because he had failed—if he was convinced that the general had done all that was in his power. His attitude towards Lee contrasted sharply with his bickering and impatient dealings with Joseph E. Johnston. Yet no one, however captiously disposed, could bicker with Lee. His character did not permit that attitude in men. Lee's mistakes were few, and when he made them he took the whole responsibility, occasionally the re-

sponsibility for the errors of others, as in the case of Longstreet. Davis's fault was not too much interference with his generals, but interference at the wrong time; it was not failure to support an officer in adversity, it was the tendency to support him too long—or, as we shall see in the next year, not long enough. His attitude toward his generals was thus not analytical, based on a calm inspection of their situations; it was emotional, and it was more akin to loyalty than derived from intelligence. Taken alone, however, it was a generous and distinguished quality, and it rose to great heights in his relations with Lee. Some weeks after the return from Gettysburg Lee wrote Davis a remarkable letter; he said in part:

> We must expect reverses, even defeats. They are sent to teach us wisdom and prudence; to call forth greater energies, and to prevent our falling into greater disasters. . . .
>
> I know how prone we are to censure, and how ready to blame others for the non-fulfillment of our expectations. . . . The general remedy for want of success in a military commander is his removal. This is natural, and in many instances proper. For, no matter what may be the ability of the officer, if he loses the confidence of his troops, disaster must sooner or later come.
>
> I have been prompted by these reflections more than once since my return from Pennsylvania to propose to your excellency the propriety of selecting another commander for this army. I have seen and heard expressions of discontent in the public journals at the result of the expedition. I do not know how far this feeling extends in the army. My brother officers have been too kind to report it, and so far the troops have been too generous to exhibit it. . . . I, therefore, in all sincerity, request your excellency to take steps to supply my place. I do this with the more earnestness because no one is more aware than myself of my inability for the duties of my position. I cannot

even accomplish what I myself desire. How can I fulfill the expectations of others?

Davis's reply reveals him at his best:

Were you capable of stooping to it, you could easily surround yourself with those who would fill the press with your laudations, and seek to exalt you for what you have not done rather than detract from the achievements which will make you and your army the subject of history and object of the world's admiration for generations to come. . . .

But suppose, my dear friend, that I were to admit, with all their implications, the points which you present, where am I to find that new commander who is to possess the greater ability which you believe to be required. . . .

My sight is not sufficiently penetrating to discover such hidden merit if it exists, and I have but used to you the language of sober earnestness, when I have impressed upon you the propriety of avoiding all unnecessary exposure to danger because I felt our country could not bear to lose you. To ask me to substitute you by some one in my judgment more fit to command . . . is to demand an impossibility. . . .

6

The lull of battle in the East gave the Confederate government time to reorganize the forces of the West, and, at the suggestion of General Polk, Johnston's small army was united with Bragg's in Tennessee. Grant, fortunately for the Confederates, took no decisive action: his army was broken up into garrison detachments along the Mississippi, as if the Federals were well enough contented with their great victory to rest upon it for a time. Rosecrans, facing Bragg, was hardly more enter-

prising than his opponent; he took no advantage of Grant's victory; and Lincoln was as deeply annoyed with his lack of energy as Davis was with Johnston's. Not all but something might be recovered if Rosecrans could be crushed, and Davis at last got Lee's consent to transfer part of his army to Bragg for temporary service. This was the first time in three years of war that the South used the "interior lines" for the swift transfer of troops from one center of war to another, and it was probably now too late to use this advantage effectively. In the middle of September, Bragg was prodded into taking the offensive, having been driven from Chattanooga without a battle, and Longstreet's corps started from Virginia.

In the week following the 10th of September hardly a day passed that did not offer to Bragg the opportunity to crush Rosecrans's scattered army in detail, but he seems, in this time, to have had only vague ideas where the enemy was; he was not certain from day to day of the position of his own troops. When Longstreet arrived (almost too late) he was shocked at the methods he saw; he described Bragg's strategy—"To wait till all good opportunities had passed, and then, in desperation, to seize upon the least favorable one." With Longstreet's corps Bragg now had 70,000 men to attack Rosecrans's 57,000—the only time the Confederates outnumbered all the available enemy on the field.

The savage and reckless battle of Chickamauga Creek was fought on September 19th and 20th, 1863, but Bragg was not even on the field: he knew, in his panic, so little of the position of the enemy and of the dispositions of his own men that his orders were wild and impossible to carry out. Longstreet directed the battle, and for the first time in the war the western Confederate

armies had able leadership. The Confederates by sheer valor drove the Federals back, till finally Longstreet discovered a gap in their line and cut it in two. Had not the Union General Thomas held on with a remnant till night, the Federal army would have been annihilated. As it was, much was accomplished with a hitherto demoralized army because an officer of great ability—not even of the greatest—had controlled the field. However, the victory was thrown away, for Bragg, instead of pursuing Rosecrans, waited a day, and found the Union army entrenched in Chattanooga. He then dismissed General Polk, whom he hated, and General D. H. Hill, of Longstreet's corps: he blamed the incomplete victory on them. Hill, who had ignored Bragg's orders only because they were incoherent, was the instigator of a scheme to get rid of Bragg. Davis restored Polk, but permitted Hill, one of the heroes of Sharpsburg and a distinguished soldier, to be disgraced.

The President was much pleased at the victory, but he was dissatisfied that it had not been complete. He was utterly bewildered at the continued unpopularity of Bragg in whom he supposed victory would restore confidence. Longstreet wrote to Seddon: "I am convinced that nothing but the hand of God can save us as long as we have our present commander." The situation was critical and Davis for the second time left Richmond for the West. . . .

From the Charleston *Daily Courier,* October 10, 1863.

Atlanta, October 9.—President Davis arrived here per special train from Augusta last evening, and proceeded this morning to the headquarters of Gen. Bragg at Marietta. He was met by Gov. Brown . . . the Governor introduced the President to the people. He made them a short address from the platform, complimenting Georgia, and

expressing his gratification at the stand she had always occupied. . . . He was particularly gratified when on the recent call of Gov. Brown for 8000 troops Gov. Brown had promptly tendered him 15,000. . . .

Marietta, Ga., October 9.—President Davis passed up this morning. . . . He appeared on the platform, and was greeted with cheers. . . . He addressed the crowd briefly, and complimented the ladies of Georgia. . . . The President was accompanied by Generals Longstreet, Pemberton and Breckinridge, Senator Cobb, Gov. Brown, of Georgia, and his own personal staff. . . .

Back of this harmless euphemism there was the intensest dissatisfaction of the people with General Bragg and all his affairs, and it was a sad and perplexed mind that Davis brought to his conferences with Bragg at his headquarters on the long mountain called Missionary Ridge overlooking the Union army below in Chattanooga.

Bragg had never yet opposed the President and now he offered to give up the command, saying he only required full subordination in his officers; Davis, at this show of firmness, was impressed. Since March the President had given up his intention to dismiss Bragg, and possibly his reason now was that he could not find any one better. There was Longstreet, who had won Bragg's own battle; there was Forrest, whose genius was proved—but deliberately suppressed by Bragg's envy. The real reason was Bragg's intense unpopularity added to Davis's support: it is possible, had Bragg been a popular general, that Davis would have let him go. Would the President be bullied by the howls of the mob? No! He had appointed Bragg and he would show the crowd that he knew better than they. One of Davis's chief weaknesses was contempt for the crowd to whom he had to look for support. He alone in the Confederacy had the right

to appoint generals, but his mistake lay in thinking that the source of this right was divine.

He retained Bragg. There is a sinister suggestion, in this act of madness, that Davis's sense of reality, seriously shaken in July, was still further deteriorating: the tragedy of the doctrinaire, Procrustean mind is its inability to stretch beyond its own preconception of events. This state of mind feeds on shadows, and from this time on Davis began, slowly at first, then solely to devour them. General Bragg became Davis's flatterer, perhaps not for any definite purpose; perhaps he flattered the President only out of the weakness and aimlessness of his own unsteady character; for Bragg was undoubtedly a case of chronic hysteria.

The retention of Bragg was an act of madness because the Army of Tennessee became its sacrifice. He could be retained only at the expense of the loss of Longstreet, who openly and contemptuously said that he would not serve under him. Davis therefore sent Longstreet with 20,000 men on a futile expedition against Knoxville, reducing Bragg's army, and exposing it to inevitable defeat. Nor was the mere loss in men the most serious loss: when Longstreet disappeared, the morale of the army disappeared too.

Then, having untangled the difficult problem of Bragg so that it would never give trouble again, the President started back to Richmond. He went to Selma, Alabama, made an excellent speech, and warned the people that the war would not end till Rosecrans was destroyed. He went on to Charleston, the lair of the terrible Rhetts and their terrible *Mercury;* he was graciously received, even by members of the Rhett family; but South Carolina was now anti-Davis in the extreme; and, while the *Courier,* the pro-Davis sheet, made his visit the feature of the

day, the *Mercury* hid it in a few lines in the corner of a page. After an absence of a month, the President, still anxious but somewhat relieved, returned to Richmond.

7

For a few weeks after Chickamauga it seemed that Bragg would be able to starve Rosecrans, penned up in Chattanooga, into surrender: the Union supplies came over a bad road sixty miles long, for Bragg held every other access. But Grant soon came on the scene, and the situation changed. By a *coup de main* he opened a new route of supply, and by the third week in November he was ready to take the offensive. Bragg held the surrounding mountains; his position looked impregnable. As it turned out, it was never really decided whether it was. For at the first onslaught of Grant's army—Rosecrans having been relieved—the Confederates turned and fled.

It was the first time a Confederate army had offered its back to the enemy; this army, moreover, had fought with desperation only two months before. It was demoralized before the first shot of the battle of Chattanooga. The men simply laid down their arms and ran.

Anger, fierce and relentless, swept over the whole South, and from this time on Davis lost utterly the confidence of the Southern people. Not only the fire-eating leaders but the common people themselves, who bore the brunt of the war, turned against the Davis government. If folly had ended even here, there might have been some hope of winning back the affections of the people; but it did not end. Bragg was not immediately dismissed. He still made excuses, and from Dalton, Geor-

gia, where he gathered the fragments of a fine army, he wrote characteristically to Davis: "Let us concentrate our available men, unite them with this gallant little army, and with our greatest and best leader at its head, *yourself if practicable,* march the whole upon the enemy and crush him in his power and glory." (Italics mine.) Davis could not resist this. His military self-esteem had received hard blows: Bragg was the only person to uphold it. Other generals complained, like Joe Johnston; still others, like Beauregard, offered advice; even Lee was occasionally short-tempered. Bragg, who should have been, for policy if for no other reason, made a public victim, was elevated to a post of honor. The *Examiner,* in its bitterly exaggerated rhetoric said: "From Lookout Mountain, a step to the highest honor and power is natural and inevitable."

For Davis, defiant of popular dictation, made Braxton Bragg Chief of Staff of the Confederate armies—the post that Lee had held in 1862. Bragg would have powerful influence in the war policy of the South, and the public now felt that Davis was indeed a tyrant. He was only proud and obstinate. Nevertheless, men whispered that his western journey had been the first step to a dictatorship.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PEOPLE

I

AT the middle of the last century the Southern people had the best-informed political life this country has ever seen, or is likely to see again. Every man felt that the government—the Federal at first, then the Confederate when it came—was directly responsible to him, and he took the trouble, or rather the pleasure, for politics wholly filled his mind, to know the meaning of the issues of the day. For this reason a leader whom the people trusted could have immense power, the sole limit of which was his ability to keep up the public confidence; without this, he had in the end, in spite of constitutional rights, no power at all, for the weapon of the people was the constant threat of nullification, of refusing to act with the government. It was Jefferson Davis's mistake to ignore the source of his strength, and to suppose that his official position alone gave him the right to rule. He was, on the whole, a wise ruler: he certainly knew the needs of the country better than, say, a county politician; but his error lay in his failure to pretend that the county politician knew better than he. In this, he contrasted sharply and unhappily with his rival north of the Potomac River.

Jefferson Davis's character, his honor, his integrity, were almost saintly. And in political philosophy he was superior to

Lincoln. The one was weak where the other was strong. Lincoln's deficient education and his lack of a large social experience issued in a too optimistic view of the political capacity of men, and impelled him to visualize a political monstrosity—pure democracy; but to this monstrous vision he brought tremendous character and courage, and a disinterested mastery of statecraft that no ruler has ever surpassed. Davis had equal courage, and he had, strangely enough in view of his doctrinaire intellect, a more realistic conception of the state; but he had an almost fantastically inadequate conception of the practice of politics. And it was because of this that he lost the confidence of the Southern people. By the autumn of 1863 it was lost, never to be regained. He was later to win their affection—which the psychology of defeat awarded to a defeated and broken man.

The first visit to the West, in December, 1862, was the tour of inspection of a commander-in-chief. The second, after Chickamauga, was primarily military in purpose; but it was made for political reasons as well. This phase of his mission also failed. He did not see that the people were not merely dispirited. They were angry and dissatisfied. And it was too late for exhortation that was not to be followed by giving the people what they desired. They desired fiercely the removal of unpopular and unsuccessful generals, and they did not stop to consider whether a general's lack of success might not be someone else's fault. They hated Pemberton, without suspecting that Johnston was also to blame for Vicksburg. Davis continued to trust Pemberton simply because he knew that Pemberton had not been wholly at fault, and he described the public protests as "senseless clamor." Doubtless that was what it was, beyond the certain, obvious fact that something was wrong. And yet this was no time for a man

to feel proud of insight superior to that of the mob. He was continually bombarded with letters—some intelligent, others from ambitious cranks, still others from other cranks protesting against the usurpations of the government—all clearly indicating that the President should change his ways:

> It is the universal sentiment of all reflecting men in this section of the country [Mississippi] that every disaster that has befallen us in the West has grown out of the fact that weak and inefficient men have been kept in power over those who were looked upon by 99/100 of the army as their superiors. . . . In the name therefore of 99/100 of our army and people I beseech you to relieve us of these drones and pigmies . . . and give us Generals of known ability. . . . I know General Price to be a man of very superior capacity. . . .

—but here the well-meaning army chaplain who wrote the letter went too far, for General Price was not a West Pointer. The letters came in by hundreds. The disaster at Chattanooga came, but even then Davis was affected not at all by the senseless clamor.

Yet he heard it. He knew that the political situation was desperate. The second Confederate Congress, elected to convene on the 7th of December, 1863, was made up almost entirely of anti-Davis men—so deeply had the people been affected by the late reverses. Till that spring he had been able to overawe an unwilling, often hostile, somewhat mediocre Congress, for even the majority of his enemies believed in his powers. This belief was shaken not so much by the disasters themselves, but by the retention of the generals who had failed. The temper of the people was not lowered by Gettysburg; like Lee's army, they thought that Lee had done wonderfully well. Nor did Vicksburg

itself undermine confidence; it was rather Davis's obstinate support of Pemberton and Bragg that disillusioned them of their belief in his wisdom. Now Congress was frankly hostile, and Davis could not be sure of a majority in either house.

Still, Davis had not yet made a positive blunder in policy; he had been discreet, cautious; he had considered all measures long and well. It was rather what he had omitted to do: he had failed to get money for the South; he had failed to bribe Europe; he had failed to concentrate his armies; he had failed to take the initiative in 1861. These omissions were not blunders; they were due to excessive caution. Nor were they decisive of the fate of the South, taken singly, or even together. And now he was trying to launch a vigorous policy, which would make enormous demands upon the people; they would not see that military necessity should put all other thoughts out of mind; nor would Davis, in his alienation from them, be able to wheedle them into their salvation. It was too late for that. He had waited too long.

At the new year, 1864, Mrs. Davis began giving receptions: the President had at last decided that he would have to do some public entertaining if there were to be a government at all. He became positively cordial; but the condescension was too belated to stem the wave of disaffection rising from Texas to Virginia, which now mounted in an irresistible tide. What the people felt we shall now try to see.

2

The Confederacy, from the first, was hopelessly outnumbered in available fighting men: forty years after the war the Federal pension roll contained the names of nearly twice as many wounded veterans as the Confederates had on the field during

the entire four years of the struggle. The South put only 700,000 men in the field all told; the North, about 1,500,000. Having few or no manufacturing plants the South was outclassed also in material resources. The blockade, which existed from the beginning of the war, and kept tightening each year, cut the people off from commerce with the North or with Europe, and forced them to rely more and more upon their resources. These were not inconsiderable. Food, at first, was plentiful throughout the whole country; it continued to be plentiful in remote districts, but there was never any adequate means of transportation. The railway system of the Confederacy was one of its weakest points. Before the war there had been no need for an elaborate system of communication. The boats which plied up and down the rivers brought the planter everything that he needed that wasn't produced on his own land—ice, the daily paper, the manufactured goods that came through New Orleans from New England or European markets; he seldom needed to take a railway journey.

The owners of the railroads, confronted with a changed order of affairs, stubbornly resisted the necessities of war, and opposed all the War Department's efforts to establish through railroads, on the ground that they would hurt local business! The town of Petersburg, for instance, which was the terminus of two railroads, refused to allow the military authorities to join the two because the hack lines did not want to lose the income from transportation from the one road to the other. This town, and many others like it, thus delivered the unfortunate inhabitants of the cities over to the exploitation of a swarm of ruthless profiteers and extortioners who bled the people of their last cent. A poor woman in Richmond, the mother of seven children, finding her-

self unable to pay $70 for a barrel of flour, asked the dealer what she should do. "I don't know, Madam," he replied, "unless you eat your children."

During the first years of the war the cost of living was higher in the Lower South than in Virginia. In January of 1862 sugar cost from nine to twelve cents a pound, a price regarded by the housewives of those days with consternation. In Augusta in the same month salt was ten cents a pound, or twenty-one dollars a sack; in Savannah in April it was twenty-five dollars a sack. By midsummer it was $100. The people were later patiently to sift the earth from under old smoke houses and tobacco barns to extract the salt which now could not be bought at any price. Flour during 1862 was $30. a barrel, calico a dollar a yard, and boots $20. a pair. The cotton crops of the planters were looked on with disfavor. Plant corn, plant corn, and feed the army, the papers urged. The last year's cotton, it was pointed out, was still in the gin houses. Another great crop, even if the blockade was raised, would only glut the markets of the world and force the price of cotton still lower. Events proved that the government and the newspapers were right. During the last years of the war the Confederate army was fatally weakened by the maintenance of large bands of soldiers who went from place to place burning cotton so that it should not fall into the hands of the enemy.

As prices went up and extortion became more and more common the City Council of Savannah took measures to protect its citizens. A City Marshal's notice of June 13, 1862, provided a fine of not more than a thousand dollars or six months imprisonment for any person convicted of exacting exorbitant prices for food-stuffs and certain other necessaries of life. The military

authorities seized a large quantity of flour owned by speculators and allowed the public to buy it at fourteen dollars and a quarter a barrel, one barrel to a family.

There was already a great deal of suffering among the poor and this increased steadily. Only those who owned land could cope in any way with the high cost of living. The soldiers' families were the chief sufferers; the family of a landless soldier was, indeed, in a pitiful plight. His pay, in a fast depreciating currency, was utterly inadequate to buy the necessities of life. A great many of the deserters from the Southern army went home in response to appeals from starving wives and children.

Edward Cooper made three applications for a furlough; they were refused; he deserted on receipt of the following letter:

My dear Edward:

I have always been proud of you, and since your connection with the army I have been prouder of you than ever before. I would not have you do anything wrong for the world; but, before God, Edward, unless you come home we must die. Last night I was aroused by little Eddie crying. I called and said, "What's the matter, Eddie?" and he said, "Oh, mama, I am so hungry!" And Lucy, Edward, your darling Lucy, she never complains, but she is growing thinner every day. And before God, Edward, unless you come home we must all die.

Your Mary.

Cooper was courtmartialed and sentenced to death. Lee affirmed the finding of the court, but pardoned him.

After the Seven Days Battles, Mr. Davis received from South Carolina a brief but extremely pointed request, from a young lady whose patriotism somewhat exceeded her literacy:

Dear Mr. President:

I want you to let Jeems C—— of company oneth 5th South Carolina regiment come home an get married. Jeems is willin I is willin his mammy says she is willin but Jeemses captin he aint willin. Now when we are all willin ceptin Jeemses captin I think you might let up and let Jeems come. I'll make him go straight back when he's done got married and fight just as hard as ever.

Your affectionate friend. . . .

The affectionate friend realized her wish, for the President wrote on the back of the letter: "Let Jeems go."

As the Southern lines shrank, "refugeeing" became common. Women and children left burned houses or communities where food had become unprocurable and traveled in wagons, usually by night, to remote places where there was little chance of invasion. The slaves of the family often preferred going with their mistresses to facing the uncertain fortunes of war. These Negroes showed a loyalty and devotion that somewhat puzzled the Abolitionists of the North who were fighting to "make them free." In some cases Southern families who had never owned slaves bought Negroes who pleaded to be saved from the encroaching Federal soldiers, who too often treated the "contrabands" with brutality and made them work harder than they had ever worked for their Southern masters. These Negroes, who "refugeed," showed an unexpected resourcefulness in coping with adversity. Many families were completely dependent upon the exertions of some slave who had chosen to share their fortunes. The wife of General Quarles, fleeing into Arkansas, was accompanied by her nurse, a middle-aged colored woman. On the morning after their arrival at their new dwelling place this woman appeared in the doorway, leading a shrinking Negro

youth by the hand. "You see this nigger, Miss Lou," she exclaimed, "I done marry him last night, and you and me ain't nevuh goin' to cut no more stove wood."

When this Negro woman was asked, near the end of her long life, how many husbands she had had, she replied: "I don't know, chile. I done bin so pestered in my mind durin' de wah dat I disremimbers sich trifles."

As the war wore on the fear of a servile insurrection which had been such a bugbear in the minds of the women living on lonely plantations and farms, died completely. The Negroes were docile, and for the most part devoted to the cause of the Confederacy.

Those Southern families whose land was not in the path of the invading armies suffered little real privation. Most of the Negroes remained on the land. The "twenty nigger law" was later modified to allow an overseer to remain on each plantation where there were fifteen Negroes. Such a force could raise enough food for the family and to spare. The old looms, which had been idle almost a generation, were set in motion, and the Negro women wove from daylight to dark. The stout homespun which they produced clothed, in time, almost everybody in the Confederacy, from the soldier in butternut jeans, to the society lady. One of these ladies, Mrs. Clement Clay, of Alabama, is said to have appeared at some gathering in Richmond during the war, wearing a dress of homespun, ornamented profusely with gourd seed buttons dyed red.

The ingenuity of the Southern women was taxed to provide substitutes for a thousand and one necessary articles. Coffee, early in the struggle, became so scarce that the Surgeon-General prohibited its use in hospitals as an article of diet; the limited supply

was hoarded for medicinal purposes, chiefly as a stimulant for soldiers suffering from exhaustion and the shock of wounds. Throughout the country parched corn, browned wheat, ground sorghum seed, or even sliced dried yams were used as substitutes. Tea was made from strawberry leaves, sassafras roots, raspberry, blackberry or huckleberry leaves. The ashes of corn cobs or the wild "life everlasting" were used to raise dough. When it was found that the roots of the buckeye, boiled with flannel, yielded a fine lather they took the place of soap in many households. Starch was made from green corn and sweet potatoes.

Medicines were very scarce. Chief among these was quinine, always badly needed to "break up" the malarial fevers of the region. A quinine pill cost a dollar in Memphis in 1862. Later the price went still higher. The Surgeon-General sent out a formula for a substitute—a tincture of dogwood, poplar, willow bark and whisky. A cordial for dysentery was made from blackberry roots and persimmons. Lung troubles were treated with a sirup made from mullein leaves and cherry bark. Vegetables were so scarce in the army rations that many soldiers contracted scurvy. To combat it edible plants growing near the camps were gathered and cooked as "greens"—wild mustard, watercress, wild garlic, sassafras, sorrel, pokeweed, peppergrass and "wild yams."

The ladies, although they wore homespun with pride, did not lose their instinct for personal adornment. Experiments were made constantly to obtain good "fast" dyes. Roots of trees were much used. The pine tree root yielded garnet; myrtle, a soft gray. Hickory bark made a bright green, willow bark a drab. Jet black was extracted from "queen's delight" and a rich brown from walnut hulls. The pokeberry produced a brilliant red which

was popular for party dresses. Rusty nails, old horseshoes, clamps and hinges were used as mordants to set the dye.

The lack of metal was felt severely throughout the whole Confederacy. Lead was so scarce that many people gave the weights of their window sashes to be made into bullets. Beauregard appealed to the planters of the Mississippi Valley to send their plantation bells to be melted and molded into cannon. Later on, as the struggle grew fiercer, the congregations of many towns offered their church bells. Twenty-five hundred pounds of bell metal, it was said, mixed with the proper amount of copper, would be enough for a field battery of six guns.

Paper, pens and ink were almost unprocurable. The Secretary of the Navy was obliged to send to his agent in Bermuda for his office supplies. The citizens went back to the old fashioned goosequill, used the reverse side of wall paper for stationery, and made ink out of the crimson sap of oak galls.

One of the severest privations which the women of the Confederacy suffered was the lack of stays to hold up the weight of their voluminous skirts. A private of Maryland was said to have brought his fiancée a pair of stays as a wedding present. A blockade runner, coming into a Southern port with a cargo of corsets, disposed of the lot within a very short time at an enormous profit.

Women knitted all day long, and sometimes at night by the faint gleam of "Confederate candles"—ropes dipped in tallow and wound around bottles. One enterprising lady knitted her husband an entire suit, which he, somewhat of a fop in happier days, wore with intense pride. Mrs. Robert E. Lee and her daughters furnished one hundred and ninety-six gloves and socks to Posey's brigade.

During the last years of the war, burning, looting and pillaging by Federal soldiers were added to the sufferings that the people had already endured. In 1864 Grant said that the Union troops must "eat Virginia out so clear and clean that crows flying over it would have to carry their provender with them."

Sheridan in his reply wrote: "I have destroyed over 2,000 barns filled with wheat, hay and farming implements; over seventy mills filled with flour and wheat: have driven in front of the army over 4,000 head of stock, and have killed and issued to the troops not less than 3,000 sheep. . . . Lieut. John Meigs, my engineer officer, was murdered beyond Harrisonburg, near Dayton. For this atrocious act all the houses within an area of five miles were burned."

Sherman's policy in Georgia and the Carolinas was similar. "I estimate the damages done to the State of Georgia and its military resources," he wrote to Major-General Halleck, "at $100,000,000, at least $20,000,000 of which has inured to our advantage, and the remainder is simple waste and destruction," and in another letter to the same general: "We must make old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war."

Whitelaw Reid has described the burning of Columbia, South Carolina: "The last morsel of food was taken from hundreds of destitute families that his soldiers might feast in needless and riotous abundance. Before his eyes rose, day after day, the mournful clouds of smoke on every hand, that told of old people and their grandchildren driven, in midwinter, from the only roofs there were to shelter them, by the flames which the wantonness of his soldiers had kindled. With his full knowledge and tacit approval, too great a portion of his advance resolved itself into bands of jewelry thieves and plate-closet burglars."

A lieutenant in Sherman's army wrote to his wife in Boston: "We have had a glorious time in this state. Unrestricted license to burn and plunder was the order of the day. . . . I have at least a quart of jewelry for you and all the girls—and some No. 1 diamond rings and pins among them. . . . Tell Sallie I am saving a pearl bracelet and earrings for her. But Lambert got the necklace and breastpin of the same set. I am trying to trade him out of them. These were taken from the Misses Jamisons, daughters of the president of the South Carolina secession convention."

The women of the South, however, continued invincible. "We mean to destroy all your food," Federal soldiers told young girls who had treated them scornfully after the burning and looting of Columbia. "Very well," was the reply, "we will live on acorns."

3

Richmond after the first few months of the war changed from a provincial city of 40,000 to a war capital, with a seething population of about 100,000. The people were completely at the mercy of a band of profiteers who doled out food at the most exorbitant prices. Feeling against these men ran so high that it was said that the only thing which could bring prices down would be the sight of a huckster hanging from a lamp post.

In March of 1862 Provost General Winder issued General Orders No. 12 which announced a tariff of maximum prices for the sale of produce, forbade huckstering in the streets of Richmond and provided that all persons disobeying the order should be punished by courtmartial. The result was that farmers would not bring their produce to market and at the end of April the

tariff was revoked. The people were relieved. Profiteering went on at a constantly increasing rate, but they were at least able to buy food at some price where they had been unable to get it at any price.

The currency depreciated fast. A dollar in gold was worth four and three quarters in paper. Bacon was a dollar a pound; coffee four dollars a pound; green tea, eleven; butter, two and a half, and common soap eighty cents a pound. Eggs which had sold for five and ten cents a dozen before the war, were a dollar and a quarter. Fowls cost six dollars and turkeys from six to ten dollars a pair.

Food continued to rise. In September of 1863 flour was thirty-five dollars a barrel, coffee five dollars a pound, bacon two dollars and twenty cents.

In April of 1863 a bread riot occurred in the streets of Richmond. The mob, composed of women and children, gathered within the gates of Capitol Park very early in the morning, and marched along silently and in order, impressing all the wagons they met. They marched through Cary Street, stopping at the store of each speculator and robbing it of its contents, flour, bacon and other food-stuffs, and then marched on into Main Street where they robbed the shops of millinery, jewelry, shoes and clothing. The Mayor, at the command of Governor Letcher, read the Riot Act, with no result. He threatened to fire into the crowd; the women fell back a little, but would not scatter. The President appeared, leaped on a wagon, addressed the crowd, telling them that he would share his last crumb of bread with them, and finally persuaded them to disperse. Later in the day the government issued rations of rice to the destitute.

In spite of the cheerful words which Davis addressed to the

people, things did not grow better; they grew steadily worse. The time came when flour was fifteen hundred dollars a barrel, bacon twenty dollars a pound, beef fifteen dollars a pound. One chicken cost fifty dollars. Butter was twenty dollars a pound.

Mrs. Roger A. Pryor had given one of the most spirited accounts of the times in her memoirs. "I am for a tidal wave of peace," a friend in Richmond wrote to her in August, 1864, "and I am not alone. Meanwhile we are slowly starving to death. Here, in Richmond, if we can afford to give $11 for a pound of bacon, $10 for a small dish of green corn, and $10 for a watermelon we can have a dinner of three courses for four persons."

Dinner parties were given, however, in spite of the fact that food was almost unprocurable. Society had never been so gay. A number of European noblemen who had espoused the cause of the Confederacy lent a foreign tone to the gatherings, and the ranks of the matrons were recruited by many of the most beautiful and accomplished women of the Lower South whose husbands were kept in Richmond by governmental duties. Captain John Moncure Robinson, of Philadelphia, arriving in Richmond, fresh from foreign travel, announced that his real mission there was to introduce the German cotillion and bring out the young married women. One of the favorite beaux was a blond giant of a Prussian baron, Lieutenant-Colonel Héros von Borcke, serving as a volunteer on Stuart's staff; he was said to ride the largest horse and wield the heaviest saber in the Confederate army, Prince Camille de Polignac was another recruit, and Lord Edward St. Maur, of the Duke of Somerset's family, achieved a reputation for gallantry at the battle of Frayser's Farm.

Frank Vizetelly, a tall red-bearded Bohemian, correspondent for the London *Illustrated News,* assisted the ladies in planning

private theatricals and charades and delighted them by insisting that everything be done just as it would be done in London. Stuart, whose spirits were always incorrigibly high, was one of the favorite performers at these charades.

It was a common thing for the young officers to dance all night, then mount their horses and ride back to camp just as dawn was breaking. Mrs. Burton Harrison, in her war recollections, has told the story of the "Starvation Club," a number of young women who banded together to provide entertainment for the soldiers once a week. "The hostesses," we are told, "who successively offered their drawing rooms were among the leaders in society. It was . . . decided that we should permit no one to infringe the rule of suppressing all refreshment save the amber-hued water from the classic James. . . . Before our first meeting, a committee of girls waited on General Lee to ask his sanction, with this result to the spokeswoman who ended with: 'If you say no, general, we won't dance a single step!'

" 'Why, of course, my dear child. My boys need to be heartened up when they get their furloughs. Go on, look your prettiest, and be just as nice to them as ever you can be.' "

A Virginian writing to Mrs. Harrison of those times said: "Lord! Lord! What a dazzling, wholesome high-bred little society it was. Night after night, I galloped into town to attend dances, charades, what not? and did not get back to my camp until two—three—what matter the hour?—but was always up, fresh as paint, when the reveillé bugles blew, and when, a little later on, my first sergeants reported to me as adjutant with their Battery Reports.

"To you and to me, looking back, it was such a blending of a real 'Heroic Age' and a real 'Golden Age' as could come but

once in a million years. Everybody knew everybody (in the highest sense of that phrase), and there was youth, and beauty, and devotion, and splendid daring, a jealous honor and an antique patriotism, an utter self-abnegation and utter defiance of fate, a knightly chastity and beautiful surrender (of the coyest maiden when her lover was going to sudden death). God! what a splendid high society that little handful was! Oh! I never talk of it now. People would only say, 'Why, there wasn't one of them worth $100,000.' "

Mrs. Lee, always a reserved woman, and now in mourning for the death of a little daughter, rarely went into society. She is said to have disapproved of social gayeties for herself and her daughters while the commanding general and his army were reduced to half rations.

Lee had already been forced to issue General Order No. 7:

Headquarters Army of Northern Virginia,

January 22, 1864.

General Orders No. 7.—The commanding general considers it due to the army to state that the temporary reduction of rations has been caused by circumstances beyond the control of those charged with its support. Its welfare and comfort are the objects of his constant and earnest solicitude and no effort has been spared to provide for its wants. It is to be hoped that the exertions now being made will render the necessity but of short duration, but the history of the army has shown that the country can require no sacrifice too great for its patriotic devotion.

Soldiers! you tread, with no unequal steps, the road by which your fathers marched through suffering, privation, and blood to independence.

Continue to emulate in the future, as you have in the past, their

valor in arms, their patient endurance of hardships, their high resolve to be free, which no trial could shake, no bribe seduce, no danger appal; and be assured that the just God who crowned their efforts with success will, in His own good time, send down his blessings upon yours.

(Signed) R. E. Lee, General.

There is no doubt that Lee's strength was seriously depleted by his starvation fare. "In General Lee's tent," the Mobile *Advertiser* reported, "meat is eaten but twice a week, the General not allowing it oftener, because he believes indulgence in meat to be criminal in the present straitened condition of the country. His ordinary dinner consists of a head of cabbage boiled in salt water, and a pone of corn bread. Having invited a number of gentlemen to dine with him, General Lee, in a fit of extravagance, ordered a sumptuous repast of bacon and cabbage. The dinner was served, and behold, a great pile of cabbage and a bit of bacon, or 'middling,' about four inches long, and two inches across! The guests, with commendable politeness, unanimously declined the bacon, and it remained in the dish untouched. Next day General Lee, remembering the delicate titbit which had been so providentially preserved, ordered his servant to bring that 'middling.' The man hesitated, scratched his head, and finally owned up:

" 'Marse Robert—de fac' is—dat ar middlin' was borrowed middlin'. We-all didn't have no middlin'. I done paid it back to de place whar I got it fum.'

"General Lee heaved a sigh of deepest disappointment, and pitched into the cabbage."

When Lee's camp was pitched near Petersburg the "buttermilk brigade" filed past his headquarters every morning, a

procession of women and children carrying small buckets of buttermilk and handfuls of vegetables to supplement the soldier's rations. The citizens of Petersburg had little food to spare, however. Cornbread was the sole diet of all except the very rich. There was no garbage decaying in the town: every particle was eaten by the starving dogs and cats which staggered about the streets constantly in search of food, and finally died of hunger. There were no rats or mice. Even the pigeons disappeared, killed and eaten in place of the chickens that were no longer procurable.

In spite of such conditions Lee was able to report that nearly every regiment in the army of Northern Virginia had reënlisted for the duration of the war.

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Mrs. Davis, although she was in mourning, at first for her father, and then for her little son, courageously fulfilled all the social duties of her position. She chaperoned parties of young people on excursions down the James, and held frequent levees at "the Confederate White House" on East Clay Street. "We went often," says Mrs. Harrison, "to Mrs. Davis's receptions, where the President never failed to say kind words in passing, and sometimes to tarry for a pleasant chat. Always grave, always looking as if he bore the sorrows of a world, he was invariably courteous and sometimes playful in his talk with very young women. These entertainments of Mrs. Davis, in the evening between limited hours, were attended by every one not in deep mourning. The lady of the Confederate White House, while not always sparing of witty sarcasms upon those who had

affronted her, could be depended upon to conduct her salon with extreme grace and conventional ease."

Lord Lyons in Washington was saying that the Confederacy was on its last legs. "I never could bear that Lord Lyons," wrote a vivacious Richmond lady, "with his red face and small eyes like ferrets; and now we have reason to suppose that England would have recognized us but for his animosity against us. . . . We have heard from dear old Dudley Mann; but of course *he* can do nothing for us in England, and he had as well come home and go with me to receptions. Mrs. Davis receives every Thursday, and Mr. Mann is a better squire of dames than he is a diplomat."

Mrs. Davis was already being spoken of as a martinet in social matters. "A sort of court is still being kept up here," the same lady writes, "but the wives of our great generals are conspicuous by their absence. . . . People here, having abundant time to find fault, do not hesitate to say that our court ladies assume too much state. . . . Mrs. Davis is very chary of the time she allots us. If King Solomon were to call with the Queen of Sheba on his arm the fraction of a moment after the closing minute of her reception, he would not be admitted."

Mrs. Davis, although she must have been aware that she received much hostile criticism, has only good words for the Richmond ladies in her memoirs. "On my first introduction to the ladies of Richmond," she wrote, "I was much impressed by the simplicity and sincerity of their manners, their beauty, and the absence of the gloze acquired by association in the merely fashionable society. They felt the dignity attached to personally conducting their household in the best and most economical manner, cared little for fashionable small talk. . . . I was im-

pressed by a certain offishness in their manners toward strangers; they seemed to feel that an inundation of people of perhaps doubtful standards and, at best, of different manners, had poured over the city, and they reserved their judgment and confidence, while they proffered a large hospitality. . . . In the more Southern and less thickly settled part of our country, we had frontier hospitality because it was a necessity of the case. In Virginia, where the distances were not so great, and the candidates for entertainment were more numerous, it was of necessity more restricted."

All the gayeties, the levees, the excursions down the James, the "starvation parties" and the charades were only the means by which anxious women sought to divert their minds. They were laid aside when the battle lines drew closer about Richmond and the wounded began to pour into the city. On May 31st, 1862, the cannonading from the battle of Seven Pines was heard, "so near that the first guns sent our hearts into our mouths, like a sudden loud knocking at one's door at night." All day the women worked, scraping lint for bandages, collecting cots and utensils, improvising hospitals. When, at nightfall, there was a lull in the cannonading they threw themselves dressed upon their beds to get what sleep they could before the dawn. The procession of the wounded began, however, before the night was over. Men who were not badly hurt limped in on foot, so grimed with smoke and powder that the women who thronged the public squares were often unable to recognize the husbands and lovers for whom they were searching. The streets were red with blood where the military ambulances had passed with their burdens of wounded and dying men. These men, in every stage of mutilation, were deposited at the St. Charles Hotel to lie upon

bare boards, until the overtaxed surgeons could reach them. Many of them died during the night, with no attention beyond that given by the inexperienced young girls who sat beside them fanning away the flies or proffering drinks of water.

Hospitals were speedily established, in school houses, tobacco barns or warehouses, wherever there was a floor large enough to accommodate a number of cots. Many private families gave over one room of their houses for a hospital, and made themselves responsible for a certain number of wounded. One woman gave all the personal and household linen of herself and her family, except for one change, to be made into bandages. There was never, as one amateur nurse complained bitterly, an adequate supply of any one article used in caring for the sick. The seat cushions of churches were used for beds; sometimes wounded men lay on pallets on the floor. Pans, dishes, pitchers, all the paraphernalia of a hospital were scarce, but every woman in Richmond ransacked her house and contributed any article that she thought might be of use.

A great many of the women who volunteered their services during the Civil War developed not only a talent for nursing, but an executive ability which created efficient organizations out of the scant materials at hand. One of the most famous was Captain Sally Tompkins, who ran her hospital so well that she was given a commission in the Confederate army. Young girls, the same young girls who danced so gayly with Lee's officers, were impressed into service, and often filled the places of surgical nurses, while any matron who showed ability above the ordinary became head of a hospital division.

In June, 1862, the battles of the Seven Days brought a greater harvest of wounded to the Richmond hospitals. "I used to veil

myself closely," says Mrs. Pryor, "as I walked to and from the hotel that I might shut out the dreadful sights in the street—the squads of prisoners, and, worst of all, the open wagons in which the dead were piled. Once I *did* see one of these dreadful wagons! In it a stiff arm was raised, and shook as it was driven down the street, as though the dead owner appealed to Heaven for vengeance; a horrible sight never to be forgotten."

A huge hospital building of unpainted pine was hastily put up at Camp Winder, a suburb of the town. The camp, which was in the middle of an arid, treeless plain, was surrounded by a trench into which the débris from the operating rooms was often dumped. Here divisions of matrons were organized and put in charge of the rude sheds filled with cots. Ambulances, jolting in all night long, discharged their patients; some of them were already dead when the end of the journey was reached; others, as they were taken out, begged pitifully to be allowed to die in peace. The surgeons went their rounds attended by a woman carrying an oil lantern or a tallow dip. Ether was not in general use at that time; the supply of chloroform was utterly inadequate. Operations were often performed without any anæsthetic whatever. The surgeons rarely had trained nurses to assist them. A young girl, going into one of the wards to aid her mother, a division matron, found her way blocked by an arm lying across the floor. The surgeon, having no assistant, requested her to stay and help him. The patient, coming out from under the chloroform a few minutes later, apologized profusely for having soiled her apron with his blood. Many men were brought into the wards suffering from collapse brought on by starvation. In their weakened condition very slight wounds often resulted in death. Delay, caused by the fact that there were not enough

surgeons to go round, also took a fatal toll. Men whose injuries were slight yielded their place on the operating table to more severely wounded comrades, then died of gangrene, while the man who had a major wound recovered.

The wailing dirges of military funerals sounded constantly throughout the city. In May, citizens on Franklin and Main Streets looked out through the tender green of new leaves on one sad procession after another winding its way to the cemetery: a handful of soldiers escorting a flag-draped coffin, a riderless horse with empty boots swinging in the reversed stirrups of an army saddle.

In June when the leaves overarched the whole street with thick shade the number of these funerals had not diminished. Messengers often came tiptoeing into churches where congregations were gathered, to touch some worshipper on the shoulder and silently point him to the door. The rector of St. Paul's, in the act of administering the sacrament, was told that the dead body of his son lay at the railroad station. Giving his duties over to another clergyman the rector hurried away, to come back in a few minutes and resume the service, reporting to his congregation that the body of another soldier had been mistaken for his son's.

Funerals were sometimes solemnized at night. But at Camp Winder ceremonies were dispensed with. Enormous graves were dug at Hollywood—a few months before the favorite excursion place of the young people of the town, where the President had made a speech in 1861. Half a dozen coffins were lowered into these pits and hurriedly covered with earth, and the workers moved on, to dig yet more graves for the enormous numbers of unburied dead.

PART III

CHAPTER IX

THE DEATH STRUGGLE: 1864

I

THE elevation of Bragg to his new post of honor met bitter opposition, for his popular following in Virginia was even scantier than in the West. Congress, led by Wigfall and Orr, wrangled with Davis over the question of his pay; they were determined at least not to give him the pay of a commanding general; but Davis, who could intimidate men if he could not soothe them, won this highly Pyrrhic victory; it was attended by certain omens of defeat that he would have done well not to ignore. The salary of Bragg was not the real issue, but Davis could not see it. The issue was the President himself. Congress attacked another hated Davis man, Colonel Northrop, head of the commissary department, whose methods of impressing supplies had made him odious to the public: Davis knew that odious methods were inevitable in the emergency, so he sustained Northrop. He should have replaced him and let the people see that the emergency and not the man was to blame. Memminger came in for his share of abuse, and he resigned, leaving the finances of the South in a hopeless tangle; the Treasury no longer knew how much paper had been issued; there was nothing that even a money wizard could have done, which Mr. Trenholm certainly was not.

Most ominous of all, Congress passed a resolution complimenting Lee that grew at last, under the agitation of Henry S. Foote, into a plot to make Lee dictator. Lee, of course, would not consider the proposal; but Davis would have been wise to make him commander-in-chief before it was too late; he was willing to give him the place—in fact, he approached him with the offer—but with conditions. Davis still wished to be commander-in-chief in name: he could not bring himself to admit that he was a military failure. Lee had all he could do to keep one army supplied without taking vague responsibility for armies elsewhere, and the farthest he would go was indefinite if sound advice.

Davis was now trying heroically to harmonize all the warring parties; the task was formidable but there was still some reasonable hope of success. However, the social and political scene in the first months of 1864 was fast moving from the confusion of 1863 into chaos. The Confederacy was cut in two, and had been since Vicksburg; though none but the wisest understood how serious this was. Secretary Seddon even tried to argue that the loss of Vicksburg had been an advantage: it liberated defending garrisons for the offensive—sound enough if the garrisons had whipped Grant in the field. There were still small armies west of the Mississippi, but they were too small to affect the main objects of the large Union armies in Virginia and Tennessee, for the Federals easily neutralized them without crippling themselves in the least: Smith in Arkansas and Taylor in Louisiana did no good whatever, and proved the futility of the dispersive system.

The authority of the Richmond government reached only a fraction of the South. A line drawn from Lee's army on the

Rapidan in Virginia through the southwestern part of that state down to Dalton, Georgia, not far from Chattanooga, thence jaggedly to Mobile, Alabama, encloses the territory that, in early 1864, was under Confederate protection. All of Mississippi was gone, most of Alabama. But because this whole line was not visibly manned every few yards by Federal soldiers, the Mississippians and Alabamians clung to their hope—complaining, however, that they were expected to give men and supplies to a government that could not give them protection from Federal marauders in return. Huntsville, Alabama, from January to July, suffered twenty-one Union raids: "We have not enough left to haul and plow with . . . and milch cows are *non est.*" These people bitterly accused of complacency and selfishness their compatriots farther south, who knew not what war meant.

Disaffection grew into disloyalty. There were mumblings for peace. In 1863 Governor Vance, of North Carolina, doubtless regretting the long interval between undisturbed drinks with the Governor of South Carolina, suggested that Davis start peace negotiations; this was the beginning of a delusion that the Southern states could return to the Union at will, and on their own terms. By the end of 1862 the character of the war had changed. The North began with the denial of State Rights, and proceeded to a war of conquest; the South began with the defense of State Rights, but necessarily moved into a war for independence or nothing. The doctrinaire State Rightists, of course, were not aware of this because they still supposed that people poured out their blood for abstractions. In North Carolina the slogan was "the Constitution as it is and the Union as it was." This was the sentiment of the small farmers who, having little experience of society and national politics, imagined that even now, after

three years of blood-letting, it was not too late to remove differences with talk. But Vance himself became so alarmed at the more violent position of his rival for the governorship, W. W. Holden, that, when reëlected, he never mentioned unvictorious peace again. However, he did not support the central government; his unflagging aim was to cripple conscription, and he constantly baited the people with the assertion that poor North Carolina was being trampled on in the interests of the other states. He opened his resources only to North Carolina regiments: in March, 1865, he had in his warehouses about ninety-five thousand new Confederate uniforms, while the Army of Northern Virginia was in rags, and enough rations, when it was starving, to feed it for three or four months. The Confederacy starved, but not because of the lack of food.

The belligerent and outspoken Holden was a most ominous sign. He was the respectable political representative of a sentiment not always so respectable; he said: "If the people of North Carolina are for perpetual conscriptions, impressments and seizures to keep up a perpetual, devastating and exhausting war, let them vote for Governor Vance. . . ." At his back roamed, in the mountains and swamps, hordes of armed deserters, unwilling conscripts, men who had little interest in the war and resented outside control; they gathered in bands and preyed on the defenseless districts where the man-power was in the army, attacked the helpless Negro, whom they hated because he was the instrument of their own neglect under the planter régime; in the mountains they murdered Negroes and whites alike. At one place they numbered five hundred, in an intrenched camp. These gangs pillaged farms and villages in all the upland districts—North Carolina, southwestern Virginia, north Georgia,

north Alabama, east Tennessee. There was a secret peace society grandly calling itself the "Heroes of America." A government spy joined a similar organization, and heard the boast that this society had successfully betrayed Vicksburg into the hands of Grant and had brought about the disaster at Chattanooga. The rebellious conscripts openly defied authority. The President dutifully read every letter he received, and one day in 1863 he read this:

Headquarters "Scalp-Hunters"
Camp Chowan, N. C., January 11.

Excellency Davis:

It is with feelings of undeveloped pleasure that an affectionate conscript intrusts this sheet of confiscated paper to the tender mercies of a Confederate States mail-carrier, addressed as it shall be to yourself, O Jeff, Red Jacket of the Gulf and Chief of the Six Nations, more or less. He writes on the stump of a shivered monarch of the forest, with the pine trees wailing round him, and "Endymion's planet rising on the air." . . . Will you not . . . pen for the happy conscript a furlough without end? Do so, and mail it if you please to that city windy, wandering Wigfall didn't winter in, called for short Philadelphia. . . .

It is with intense and multifariously proud satisfaction that he gazes for the last time upon our holy flag—that symbol and sign of an adored trinity, cotton, niggers, and chivalry. . . .

And now, bastard President of a political abortion, farewell.

"Scalp-hunters," relic, pole, and chivalrous Confederates in crime, good-bye. Except it be in the army of the Union, you will not again see this conscript. . . .

2

Such were the extreme signs of discontent: that the more respectable and loyal portion, the majority of the Southern

people, were restless could not be denied, and Davis asked the new Congress, their restless representatives, for strong measures to bring the people to order. In his message he pointed out that "public meetings have been held, in some of which a treasonable design is masked by a pretense of devotion of state sovereignty, . . . a strong suspicion is entertained that secret leagues and associations are being formed. In certain localities men of no mean position do not hesitate to avow their disloyalty and hostility to our cause, and their advocacy of peace on the terms of submission and the abolition of slavery." He therefore asked that the writ of *habeas corpus* be suspended again; Congress granted the request, not because Davis made it, but to save the country. The act carefully limited the President's use of the suspension, and granted it for only ninety days. A new conscription law went into effect on February 17th, 1864, calling for all men between seventeen and fifty—"robbing the cradle and the grave," said Ulysses S. Grant. This was not true; the law aimed at putting the able men in the field, letting the oldest and the youngest serve as the home-guard.

From the passage of these laws it would seem that Congress was still under the control of Davis, but strings were tied to his effective use of them. *Habeas corpus* could be suspended only in certain cases, and the President had little control over exemptions. Doctors, preachers, and newspaper editors were exempt; Lee sarcastically remarked that it was the misfortune of the Confederacy that the ablest strategists were confined by law in the editorial rooms of the press. Civil officers, both state and national, were exempt. In fact, everybody who tried hard enough could be exempt: a man could juggle himself from one exempt civil position to another, and indefinitely escape field service.

Brown of Georgia and Vance of North Carolina, to say nothing of Magrath of South Carolina and Moore of Alabama, constantly used their exempting power to weaken the Confederate armies. In the eyes of these men, particularly Brown and Vance, Davis was rapidly becoming a monster greedy for power. Stephens, who now became the avowed leader of the enemies of "tyranny," hysterically told the Georgia legislature that "I was not born to acknowledge a master from either the North or the South." ". . . Almost all the useful and necessary occupations of life will be under the control of one man. . . . This is certainly an extraordinary and dangerous power." Stephens believed that the armies should be disbanded in the fall; the men could take the field in the spring when there was need; he did not say what the enemy would do in the interval. Joe Brown, whose conception of the war resembled that of small boys fighting in the backyard with wooden swords, resented the service of his men in far-away Virginia; when Sherman appeared he called upon all Georgians to "rally round the green graves of their grandsires." Incredible as it may seem, these die-hard theorists feared the enemy less than the specters of tyranny and dictatorship. Later in the year the Montgomery *Mail* said: "The tendency of the age . . . is toward monarchy, and unless the tide is stopped we shall reach something worse than monarchy. . . . Every step we have taken during the past four years has been in the direction of military despotism." In the end, it is doubtful if Davis, using all the tricks of the demagogue, could have conciliated such fantastic opposition to carrying on the war—for that was what it amounted to.

Nevertheless, in spite of it, the Confederate government had powerful armies in the field for the 1864 campaign. The chief

difficulty was feeding them; there was food, but the transportation system was worse than ever. The equipment of the armies was better than it had ever been. The armies, East and West, were armed with the finest Enfield rifles; and the Tredegar Iron Works, in Richmond, could now cast the best of ordnance. There were arsenals and munition plants at Selma, Alabama, at Atlanta, at Fayetteville, North Carolina. Davis could boast that he had established the finest powder-mill in the world.

There was reason to expect success, not only because the armies were still kept up, but because the North was about to have acute troubles of her own. As the winter passed into spring, Davis, who had first listened to Lee, then to Seddon, and was now hearing the soothing voice of Bragg, had decided to undertake a powerful offensive against Sherman, who had succeeded Grant in the command of the West. It was dangerous strategy for a man not naturally bold. He was now like a poker player who, having lost most of his capital in small stakes, tries with one bet to win it all back from an opponent whose capital from the beginning was larger than his; there was a chance to win but the odds were heavily against him. Bragg urged all winter an offensive in the West—a campaign that he would not have dared to lead in person. The President listened and in his perplexity gave his consent. Bragg was eager for Johnston to try what he himself had failed at, perhaps in self-vindication; he would not have failed, he intimated, had he been given more men; Johnston, he must have felt, would fail too (not being an aggressive general) and his own record would be cleared of blame. In the events that follow it is difficult to say where Bragg's dislike of Johnston and his desire for self-justification end; a critic

unfriendly enough might say that they ended in the downfall of the Confederacy.

The armies were still powerful, but losses inevitable in another campaign could not be replaced: the man-power, as 1864 opened, was practically exhausted—the available man-power, for the deserters and skulkers could not be counted. Far-sighted men, of whom the leader was the gallant Irishman General Patrick Cleburne, urged the arming of the slaves; Cleburne first broached the subject in 1862, but was promptly rebuked. Breckinridge was for Negro troops. In January, 1864, a meeting of the corps and division generals of the western army once more declared that Negro soldiers were absolutely necessary; the proposal was sent to Davis, who turned it down. It would have meant the doom of slavery, and Davis was not ready to sanction such a revolutionary measure. The rank and file of the army, though having no direct interest in slavery, had great interest in white rule, and it was from these, rather than from the large slaveholders, that protest might have been expected. A Negro soldier could not be expected to remain a slave. The protest might have been too violent for the government to live through. So Davis must have felt; and his feeling was characteristic; he could not be bold and audacious until he was cornered. A year later he was willing to take any kind of soldiers—white or black; it was too late.

Davis now consented to let Bragg push Johnston into an offensive—the decision of a losing gambler, cornered. It was the first time that he had heartily approved of offensive strategy: when it had chance of success he supported it with a divided mind, and coined that phrase, "offensive defensive," which moved the *Examiner* to some of its most effective satire. Lee's

invasion of Pennsylvania had been crippled by the retention of small garrisons along the coast and in the interior; it was a combination, fatal to complete success, of offensive and defensive strategy that, because of the limited resources of men, was bound to fail if the Army of the Potomac was competently led. There is little doubt that Lee, with 100,000 men, and in spite of Longstreet's mistakes, would have demolished Meade's army at Gettysburg. He should have been given that number for an overwhelming offensive, or the offensive should not have been launched at all. As Mr. Eckenrode acutely says, a man like Davis, temperamentally opposed to risks, either risks too little or, in desperation, risks too much. In 1863 he risked too little; under the influence of the baneful Bragg he was about to risk everything at a most unfavorable moment.

As early as February Bragg began urging Johnston to advance, when spring came, into Tennessee with an army that he himself had left demoralized. Johnston did not approve of the plan, nor did Longstreet, who was still in East Tennessee. Bragg wanted to give Longstreet to Johnston, but Longstreet soon rejoined Lee on the Rapidan. However, every effort was made to strengthen Johnston's army, so that when the campaign opened he mustered about 65,000 men—more than Lee had. But he was opposed by Sherman, the ablest fighting general of the Union, with 100,000. Davis seems to have left the whole matter to Bragg, and it can hardly be doubted that Bragg misrepresented to Davis the western situation. He exaggerated Johnston's numbers and resources, and he minimized the strength of Sherman; perhaps not consciously, but because he was impelled by the demands of a weak and hysterical nature to believe what he wished to believe in his own self-vindication. Davis was neither weak nor hysterical, but

he was desperate, and he was willing to listen to hopeful words from whatever source they might come, even from a general who had been a failure in every field.

The days of March and April were full of anxiety, and the President's poor health was at its worst. He still worked doggedly at his military details—shoes for this brigade, the appointment of a surgeon to that—but he was more affable than he had ever been before. He continued his daily horseback rides. Then, to his terrible anxiety for public affairs, were added the effects of private grief. Mrs. Davis at this time was in the habit of bringing him his lunch to his office, and one day, while they were together at the luncheon hour, an excited Negro ran in with the news that their little boy, Joseph Emory Davis, had fallen off a gallery. When the parents got to him, he was dead.

A messenger arrived with a dispatch; Davis said, "I must have this day with my little child." He was prostrated, and he repeated again and again, "Not mine, O Lord, but thine." Next day his powerful will had steadied him, and he kept his office hours.

Who could have borne his responsibility better than he, or who, in the midst of "thorns innumerable," would have done so well? Who could have resisted any better the temptation to believe his flatterers, those voices that whispered that all was not lost and told him, in the words of one of his favorite poets, that if "hopes were dupes, fears may be liars?" Who can decide how far his vanity permitted Bragg to influence him? It was probably the will to believe that all was right, no less than vanity, that had impaired his sense of reality. And his deep and genuine religious feeling, much more than fatalism in disaster, led him to put the Confederacy in the hands of God. In doing this he

was only doing what all the Confederate leaders did. Since the Cromwellian wars there had not been an army so religious as Lee's. The trinity described by the unwilling conscript, "cotton, niggers, and chivalry," would have been more accurate if, in place of chivalry, he had written God. The Covenanter and not the Cavalier made the fierce and unyielding spirit of the Southern soldier.

3

The campaign of 1864 opened, not in the West, but in Virginia, and more fiercely than ever before. Grant, after his victory at Chattanooga, had been made a lieutenant-general in command of all the armies of the Union, and he proceeded to formulate the grand strategic plan which, if successful, would put an end to the Confederacy forever. General Butler's army on the peninsula below Richmond formed the Union left; Meade's Army of the Potomac, north of the Rapidan, which Grant decided to command in person, was the center; and Sherman's army in northern Georgia was the right. They were to move as one great army, simultaneously, and crush the South. By this time Lincoln had stopped playing the game of war, and the credit for the Union strategy belongs solely to Grant. His own object was Lee's army and Richmond; Sherman's, Johnston and the capture of Atlanta: if these ends could be achieved the Confederacy would fall.

In the first days of May Grant crossed the Rapidan River with 120,000 men; he had expected to be opposed, and when he saw that Lee did not dispute the crossing he marched confidently into the Spotsylvania Wilderness, intending to clear it and attack Lee in the open ground on the south side. Lee, with

60,000, fell like a thunderbolt on Grant while he was still entangled in the thicket: Grant's superior numbers, unwieldy in the brush, were largely neutralized; and his artillery could not be used. The dismal and bloody battle of the Wilderness was a tactical victory for Lee; he rolled up both flanks of the Union army, just as Jackson, the year before, had crushed the right flank of Hooker; but he lacked the reserve power to make the victory decisive. And Grant, who was a very different man from Hooker, was not demoralized and did not give up the field; though his losses had been terrific and two corps of the Union army practically destroyed. He then decided on "fighting it out on this line if it takes all summer," for his losses could, unlike Lee's, be replaced, until in the end, he thought, the South must yield.

Any of the generals who had preceded Grant must have surely retreated, but baffled as he was he gave the order, "Forward, by the left flank," and the Army of the Potomac moved to the southeast towards Spotsylvania Court House, near Richmond. Lee said to his staff: "Gentlemen, the Army of the Potomac at last has a head." But Lee again foiled his enemy by winning the race to Spotsylvania, and Grant found him intrenched and formidable as ever. Grant was outgeneraled, and all he could do was to hurl his men against Lee in frontal attacks. At Spotsylvania he gained, at the famous Bloody Angle, a momentary success, but in the end he was repulsed. The slaughter—it was literally that—was unspeakable; for the first time the trenches literally ran with blood and special details were constantly removing the bodies so that the men could fight without standing upon them. Baffled again, Grant again "sidled" toward Richmond, and found Lee too strongly intrenched on

the North Anna to attack him; once more he sidled, and then fought the battle of Cold Harbor, the scene of the struggle at Gaines's Mill in 1862.

Grant, knowing no tactics but headlong attack, now precipitated the most useless butchery of men in American history. By this time he was desperate; the whole North was looking on; and he had not yet whipped "Bobby Lee." The Federal privates had begun saying, "No matter who the general is he can't whip Bobby Lee." He ordered a frontal attack all along the line, and Lee's men, behind earthworks, shot down 8,000 in half an hour, while only a few hundreds of Confederates fell. It is said that Grant threw himself on an army cot and wept, and yet he ordered another attack: it is the only time that Grant became unnerved. The Federal soldiers would not move; it was a passive mutiny that Grant could not ignore; and he abandoned the attack. Still he would not admit defeat; the wounded Federals lay for twenty-four hours between the lines. This was the darkest hour of Grant's career, for instead of acknowledging defeat and asking for a truce, he disingenuously accused Lee, in a note, of responsibility for the sufferings of the wounded Federals. At Cold Harbor the two armies faced each other for some days.

Davis was again constantly at the front, although now he was giving less advice than ever to Lee. His greatest anxiety was the safety of Petersburg, threatened by Butler, and he held frequent conferences with Beauregard who commanded that "department." Beauregard proposed, while Lee and Grant hesitated after Cold Harbor, to transfer part of Lee's army to reinforce his own small force, so that Butler could be destroyed; then to rejoin Lee for an effective blow against Grant. Who can say that the plan would not have succeeded? However, it called

forth from Lee the only curt and peremptory letter on record: he warned Beauregard that unless he sent more troops speedily to the Army of Northern Virginia, the result would be disaster. Butler blundered, and did not take Petersburg. Grant began his turning movement again, crossing the James, and by the last of June the siege of Petersburg began.

Davis was once more confident that all chance of success was not gone. There was ground for the confidence, but he did not suppose that victory was near. One day, walking in the public square by the Capitol, he talked to some young girls, who asked, in reply to his confident words, "But shall the army be fed?" The President answered: "I don't see why rats, if fat, are not as good as squirrels."

Rats, however, were not Davis's hope for the Confederacy, but the fact that Lee had fought the greatest of his campaigns and that Grant's failure to complete his part of the Federal grand strategy had almost demoralized the Northern people. Lee had been outnumbered, in all the battles since the first of May—the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor—exactly two to one, although at the end, if Grant had received no reinforcements, their number would have been about equal, for Lee had put *hors de combat* nearly as many men as he had in his own army at the beginning of the campaign. Grant had lost, without having visibly achieved more than McClellan in 1862, who had arrived before Richmond with trifling loss—he had lost 60,000 men, and won for himself the name "Butcher Grant." A moan of horror and despair swept the whole North, and Davis now began to look in that direction, as he had previously looked to Europe, for assistance to end the war.

The Northern people were not aware that Grant's policy of

"attrition" was gradually wearing out the Confederates; they knew only that he had not taken Richmond and that he was sending their sons to slaughter. Fort Donelson, Vicksburg, Chattanooga—the three decisive events of the war—were forgotten, and forgotten too was the increasing weakness of the Confederacy. Such is the hysteria of the crowd thrown off balance by the surface appearance of events. The South undoubtedly had, at this moment, an excellent chance to win, and it goes to prove that God favors the bigger cannons no more than he favors the side that keeps up the steadier morale. The demoralization of the North in the summer of 1864 exceeded any such panic depression that the Confederacy felt until the very end. In spite of the immense resources of the North, in spite of the tremendous military advantages it had won, the South, by judicious play, by an adjustment of military policy to the Northern political situation, still had a fighting chance to win.

The Northern political sky was overcast, and the proper rôle of the South consisted in keeping it so by continuing to balk the Federal offensive, as Lee had balked it in Virginia. It was the one period of the war when the South might have won by standing on the defensive, by merely holding its own; for now, for the first time, the Northern people would be satisfied with nothing short of overwhelming success. They were tired. There were murmurs even among the more intelligent that the South could never be subdued. The murmurs of the intelligent supporters of the Northern cause expanded to a roar of dissatisfaction, intelligent and unintelligent, in the ranks of the Democrats, who had always opposed the war. The Democrats cried for peace, and proceeded to nominate General McClellan for the Presidency. Upon the ability of the South to ward off a decisive

victory until the Presidential election in November depended the issue, success or failure. If the South held its own, Lincoln would be discredited and the war declared a failure; if the Federal armies won, Lincoln would have justification in the eyes of a wavering people. McClellan repudiated the peace plank of the Democratic platform, which admitted disunion; but his election would probably have so shaken the war power of the North that the Copperheads would have prevailed.

Davis was doing his utmost to profit by the Northern panic. In July he brought upon himself the renewed wrath of his enemies—Lee by this time was given sole credit for every success—by receiving unaccredited emissaries from the North, who came talking peace. Their motive is to this day not quite clear; probably Lincoln wished to sound out the Confederate morale, to see how far the Confederate leaders despaired of success. Davis's reception was not official; he met the two men informally in Benjamin's office. They were naïvely surprised at his consistent reference to the "two countries" and at his unwillingness to consider reunion. Then they departed as mysteriously as they came.

There were Confederate peace-makers and plotters operating in Canada: Clement C. Clay of Alabama, and Jacob Thompson, of Mississippi. They were in constant communication with Northern secret societies—the "Sons of Liberty" and the "Knights of the Golden Circle"—who plotted revolution on a grand scale, including the burning of New York and the release of 9,000 Confederate prisoners at Chicago, whom they intended to arm. Clay corresponded with Horace Greeley, who took the peace program of disunion seriously; Lincoln promptly repudiated it; and it came to nothing.

The depression at the North, seen in retrospect, was made up of sheer hallucination: the people thought little of their past success and less of imminent, decisive success to come: it was a seizure of hysteria upon the mob mind. But, as if to give the fantasy substance, Lee detached an army corps, under Jubal A. Early, who speedily cleared the Shenandoah Valley of Federal troops and early in July crossed the Potomac into Maryland. That Lee could have detached part of his army showed that he was not nearly so exhausted as the Washington authorities tried to pretend, but the public exaggerated Early's strength; for, when he appeared at the gates of Washington, a cry went up that the rebels were there with 25,000 men. Early had only 10,000, but he might, on July 11th, have marched into the city, had he known that Grant, in his belief that he had crippled Lee, had practically stripped the Capital of troops. If Early had marched through Washington and dispersed the Lincoln government, the Confederate hope—which was now higher than it had been in 1863—would have risen still higher, and the Northern morale would have sunk still lower. Early could not have held the city; troops from Grant arrived on the 12th and 13th; but he missed a great moral effect.

Nevertheless, in Richmond, the raid had good results. It proved, or seemed to prove, that military success was still possible: the situation in the East had cleared: Grant was stopped and Washington had been threatened more direly than ever before. The Confederacy could no doubt hold its own indefinitely in the East. But what of the West, the real center of war? Could Johnston hold Atlanta? If he could, the Northern public might cease to support the war, and the Confederacy at the last moment would succeed.

4

The history of Jefferson Davis during the War between the States is practically identical with the movements, the failures and the victories, of the Southern armies. He had almost no social life, and his political life was the shadow of his military policy. The vast drama of the war was in a sense the externalization of the interior drama of Davis's soul. Every event was swiftly and subtly, sometimes tortuously, recorded upon his sensibility, and the marches of armies and the tactics of battles were the reflections of his own powerful will. More than that of almost any other great figure in history, the understanding of his character requires an analysis of events taking place at a distance from him. For these were extensions of his own mind, and neither he nor they are intelligible unless thay are seen together. Because of this the western campaign of 1864 takes on something of the quality of a Greek tragedy.

There was Davis, the protagonist, suffering the consequences of his mistakes, but equally the victim of circumstances and fate; never faltering; never admitting defeat; but always, in his austere gray cape and wide hat, walking along Clay Street, the very image of unbending pride, of that vice of the mighty which the Greeks called Hybris. In this last year there was in him, perhaps, a little of the madness of pride, a certain tortured resentment against an adversary too complex for him to understand; and yet he felt none of that humility he was later to feel in the face of an incomprehensible fate. He was now blind Œdipus raging against misfortune, but not yet knowing that he was blind. . . .

When Grant crossed the Rapidan, Sherman marched against Johnston in Georgia. Johnston began falling back, slowly and

carefully, before Sherman's greater strength: an offensive was out of the question, and Johnston knew it, for he would do well to preserve his army intact on the defensive. Bragg, at the outset of the campaign, had Johnston where he wanted him; he was convinced that Johnston would not throw himself headlong against Sherman, and he was equally certain, since the President was of the belief that Johnston had the strength, that this would mean his rival's fall. For he had argued the President into the lulling belief that this was the hour for aggression.

Johnston continued to fall back all through May before the finest army in America; it was probably the finest, best-drilled and best-equipped army in the world, commanded by a general whose military genius was as great as his personal integrity as a man was small. Sherman's army at this time, having suffered no recent defeats nor losses in the best quality of officers and men, was incomparably better than Grant's army in Virginia. Yet it was against this formidable enemy that Bragg wished an offensive to be launched by an army outnumbered three to two. As Johnston retreated, Bragg complained that he was demoralizing the men by use of earthworks—as if he, Bragg, had left the army after Chattanooga in the pink of condition! As Johnston fell back the Confederates, contrary to all precedents in war, gained in confidence, for here was a leader who skillfully parried with the enemy and threw away few lives. But the President, who by this time had lost his hold on the realities of the West, had lost all patience with Johnston: he had not trusted him since the peninsular campaign of 1862, and he had sent him to the West in 1863 only because Seddon had urged it.

Towards the end of May Johnston had decided that there was only one way to thwart Sherman. It was impossible to betray

so clever a soldier into a frontal attack on the Confederate works; Sherman, unlike Grant, moved round the Confederate flank without fighting, advancing a little each day. The solution of the problem was suggested by Nathan Bedford Forrest, who as early as April advised Johnston to send him against Sherman's communications with 10,000 cavalry. Sherman would, in this fashion, be cut off from his supplies, and in the mountains of Georgia he would find little provender and be forced to retreat or attack Johnston's intrenchments; if he did the latter he would be almost certain to be hurled back and defeated. In this terrible crisis the South had for its salvation the heaven-sent genius of Forrest, the greatest cavalry leader of modern times, and it only remained to be seen whether Davis would use him and be saved.

From May until July Johnston patiently and persistently pleaded with Davis through Bragg to send Forrest against Sherman's line of supply. Again and again the plea was rejected. Bragg, with an omniscient air, replied once that the movement had been considered, then changed the subject. To military persuasion Johnston added the influence of the politicians. Senator Henry, a Georgian, wrote to Seddon that Forrest's plan should be executed; Seddon endorsed the plan; but he no longer had the confidence of the President. Bragg had completely obscured him.

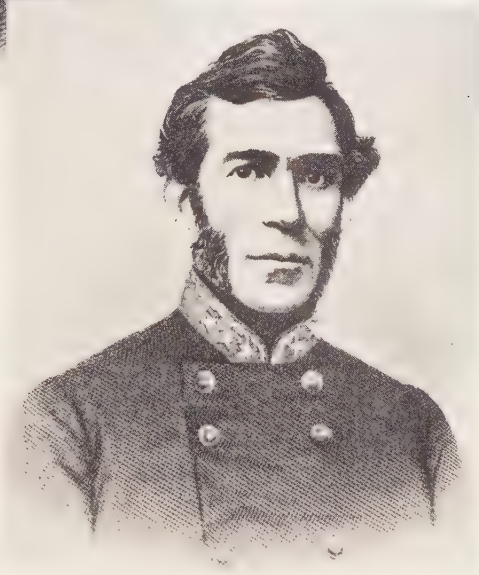
So Johnston's retreat, which day by day let Sherman get nearer Atlanta, inevitably continued, but still the President kept the wires hot demanding why Sherman was not attacked. On June 17th Bragg saw his chance to close in on Johnston; he wrote to Davis: "As the entire available force of the Confederacy is now concentrated with the two main armies, I see no solution of the difficulty but in victory over one of the enemy's armies

before the combination can be fully perfected." Bragg deluded Davis with the specter of reinforcements on the way to Sherman, and he subtly flattered with the phrase "entire available force." This implied that the dispersive system was inviolable, and that troops scattered over the South were not actually available. Bragg's letter also strengthened the delusion that Johnston's army was larger than it was, and Sherman's smaller than it would be in a few days. Thus he was putting Johnston where he would have to fight or be removed.

The public demand for Forrest rose to a fierce clamor, and for once, at least, the public was right. Johnston won Howell Cobb's support, and Cobb, who was Davis's friend, might have been expected to bring the President round to his views. But Cobb made the fatal mistake of sending his appeal at the time Governor Joe Brown sent his; it was fatal because Davis was by this time so prejudiced against Brown that his voice alone, in the matter, was enough to damn it. Brown had crippled Davis's projects from first to last, and it was only human that he should resent it. Unfortunately, however, Brown was talking sense; he had risen above his usual ignorance, and now he sent the President an astute telegram on the western problem which, in the light of the reply it received, becomes highly ironical. Brown said:

. . . I regret exceedingly that you cannot grant my request as I am satisfied Sherman's escape with his army would be impossible if ten thousand good cavalry under Forrest were thrown in his rear this side of Chattanooga and his supplies cut off. The whole country expects this, *though points of less importance should be for a time overrun.* Our people believe that Genl. Johnston is doing all in his power with the means at his command. . . . *We do not see how*

General Joseph E. Johnston



General Braxton Bragg

Forrest's operations in Mississippi . . . interfere with Sherman's plans in this State as his supplies continue to reach him. . . . Your information as to the relative strength of the two armies in North Georgia *cannot be from reliable sources.* If your mistake should result in the loss of Atlanta . . . the blow may be fatal to our cause and remote posterity may have reason to mourn over the error.

While posterity does not seem to mourn grievously over the error, the closing sentence of this message was prophetic. Brown had, in fact, cut the ground from under Davis's feet. Davis had just been feebly arguing that Forrest was already on one of Sherman's communications; but Sherman was, as Brown intimated, drawing very little sustenance from Mississippi. And Brown exposed the misrepresentations that Bragg had been practicing upon Davis regarding the strength of the two armies. In Bragg's dishonor, not in his defense, it must be said that it is improbable that he deliberately misled Davis: he did it unconsciously because he wished to overthrow Johnston, and he cannot have the distinction of being a deliberate, calculating villain whose strength one is bound to respect; he was, more probably, only a weak and stupid fool who did not understand his own motives. This being so, what shall we say of Davis, who trusted him? Here Davis's feeble grasp of human nature betrayed him; he does not seem to have suspected that a ridiculed failure might possibly hate his admired successor, and plot his downfall. Davis's innocence would have been virtue in a saint, but it was stupidity in a politician. His unshakable belief in Braxton Bragg was his sole major blunder as President; but it was a blunder of such magnitude that poor humanity must leave it to God alone to forgive.

The President's reply to Brown revealed the depth of his

ignorance of affairs in the West and his tendency, in a crisis, to fall back upon fixed ideas while the embarrassing reality marched on unchecked. His message was a whip-like rebuke at a moment when he should have strained every muscle to conciliate Brown:

> . . . I am surprised to learn from you that the basis of the comparison I made on official reports and estimates is unreliable . . . your dicta cannot control the disposition of troops [Forrest] in other parts of the Confederate States. Most men in your position would not assume to decide on the value of the service to be rendered by troops in distant positions. When you give me your reliable statement of the comparative strength of the armies, I will be glad to know the source of your information as to what the whole country expects, and posterity will judge.

Posterity as a rule judges with a vengeance. Davis, in his high and, at this moment, ironical assumption of superior knowledge, had put Brown in his place: he had dared to meddle with the President! Then, in the last sentence, he substantially called him a liar.

Forrest was not called upon, but was left in Mississippi protecting useless cotton and crates of chickens in villages, while Sherman slowly but with deadly certainty pushed Johnston toward Atlanta. Bragg was not wholly to blame for this. But Bragg's influence joined to the ineradicable love of the dispersive system to which even now the President clung was responsible. It is possible that Forrest would have been left in Mississippi even if there had been no Braxton Bragg, for Davis's unfailing reply to the call for Forrest, almost the mechanical response of an automaton, was that the movement would yield Mississippi

to the enemy. Brown in his telegram had refuted that argument, too, but Davis, confronted with a final giving up of the dispersive, departmental system, recoiled, and decided to let Sherman advance. Because Sherman's progress was slow, and because Forrest's absence from Mississippi involved a swift, if temporary, loss of unstrategic ground, he preferred to maintain the dispersive system; it permitted him to *hope that something might turn up.* Meanwhile he could drift and snatch the day. But there was still another phase of Davis's now almost incredible position. He hated retreat. Johnston was maneuvering Sherman into the interior, but Davis disliked maneuvers, however promising in the long run, if they yielded ground. His conception of war, in the end, was that of emotional patriotism; he believed in shutting his eyes, clenching his teeth, and dashing against the enemy on the frontier. He might lose, but he could not be accused of giving up ground. It did not occur to him that while Johnston gave ground he also preserved his army, waiting to strike the enemy unawares.

Bragg, who was now virtually commander-in-chief—although he knew better than to meddle with Lee—Bragg arrived in Atlanta in July, and kept up a lively correspondence with the President. Though Davis would have been shocked at the suggestion, and Bragg would have hotly repudiated it, the position of Bragg in Atlanta was virtually that of a spy. It had been agreed before he left Richmond that if Johnston did not fight for Atlanta, he was to be removed. Events now speedily deprived Johnston of the opportunity. Bragg constantly reported to the President that Johnston had lost heavily in a futile retreat, and that now the advantage of morale was with the enemy. Yet he reported at the same time that Johnston had the power to defeat

Sherman but would not. His dispatches to Richmond were contradictory and incoherent. Davis saw nothing wrong with them.

Most of Bragg's misinformation came from John B. Hood, a gallant subordinate who had the brain of a hare and the personal courage of a lion. Hood, in fact, was Bragg's choice as Johnston's successor; he was honestly impatient with Johnston's cautious retreat, and he may have been infatuated with the prospect of conducting a dashing campaign that would save the Confederacy. It is impossible to believe that Hood was not an honest man; he was the tool of Bragg and of fate. If Bragg had been a more intelligent man, there would be something sinister in his choice of Hood; there would be the suggestion that he feared Johnston might succeed, and plotted to replace him with a man who was sure to fail, since he himself had failed. But Bragg was simply obsessed with hatred of Johnston; he wanted the Confederacy to win; and his choice of Hood was merely inborn bad judgment.

Before Davis would consent to Hood's promotion, he asked Lee what he thought of him (Hood had commanded a division under Lee). Lee replied cautiously, yet unmistakably, that Hood was brave and zealous, but implied that he should not command an army. The excited and desperate mind of Davis was no longer sensitive to innuendo, and he seems to have thought that Lee had confirmed the choice. Lee's disapproval really shouts from the page. The truth was that Davis had made up his mind, and he was now capable of hearing only those words that he wished to hear. There remained the question of Hood's ability to defeat Sherman. How could this be decided? Ways suggest themselves, but the one Bragg and Davis used was obviously chosen for its simplicity. They simply asked Hood himself, whose optimism

made possible one answer—yes. This was considered a sufficient test of Hood's ability to defeat Sherman. Davis did reëxamine the latest reports of the army's strength, but since they were supplied by Hood and came through the hands of Bragg, they could not alter his decision.

As Johnston fell back steadily the Georgia country people began complaining, although he still had the full confidence of his army. For the first, and perhaps the last time, Jefferson Davis heeded what the frightened populace said: it confirmed his belief that Johnston should be removed.

Once more Johnston asked for Forrest, and the President replied with his flat and final rejection of the plan. He was now not only disappointed at Johnston's retreat, he was angry, for he believed that Johnston had not attacked Sherman because he was a coward. The tone of the press showed that Johnston still had the support of the people, and yet he had not a single supporter in the government: even Seddon turned against him. Davis's reasons for rejecting Johnston's strategy are interesting because they prove that he lacked any sense whatever of the nature of the crisis: Forrest offered the last desperate hope of the South to win. Davis said the withdrawal of cavalry from Mississippi and Alabama meant the loss of territory and the exposure of the arsenal at Selma! It was the reply of a machine that could respond in only one way to events.

Johnston had to go. But before the President dismissed him he was assailed by last-minute qualms; so he telegraphed to Bragg that, after all, it might be better to let Forrest attack Sherman's communications. But Bragg now had the upper hand; he was no longer leaning on Davis; Davis was asking him what to do. His reply of July 15th was a masterpiece of evasion: "I am

decidedly opposed, as it would perpetuate the past and present policy which he [Johnston] has advised and now sustains. Any change [i.e., promotion of Hood] will be attended with some objection. This one [using Forrest] could do no good."

Next day Davis telegraphed to Johnston: "I wish to hear from you as to present situation and your plan of operations so specifically as will enable me to anticipate events." It was incredible: Davis demanding that Johnston not only promise to attack Sherman, but that he foretell what Napoleon had never been willing to prophesy—the issue of a pitched battle. Johnston's reply was necessarily unsatisfactory, and on the 17th he received notice from Adjutant-General Cooper that he had been superseded by Hood.

Bragg had succeeded in removing his enemy, just as his enemy, according to his own statement—and Johnston was too honorable to lie—was planning to deliver Sherman a blow. Joseph E. Johnston, whose limitations are well-known, was a fine soldier and a true patriot; he wept in regret for the fatal step Davis had taken, but he spoke not a word of detraction of General Hood.

In spite of public opinion Bragg had virtually resumed command in the West: Hood was his tool. Together they planned a series of attacks on Sherman's intrenchments, and on the 22nd of July they drove some of Sherman's men back, but at frightful loss. Bragg informed Davis that Sherman "was badly defeated and completely failed in one of his turning movements, heretofore so successful." He could gloat over his rival's fall for a time, but by the end of August Sherman had got in the rear of Atlanta, after defeating Hood in several pitched battles, and Hood had to retreat. On the 2nd of September Atlanta fell. Thus ended Bragg's brilliant offensive in the West, and at this moment the Confederacy was beaten.

Atlanta was the strategic center of the Confederacy, for it opened all of Georgia to Sherman, who could now march through the heart of the country and circle round to the rear of Lee's army at Petersburg. But even more important, at the moment, was the effect that the fall of Atlanta had on the Northern people. The victory had restored prestige to the Lincoln government, and he was certain to be elected in November. The war, two months ago on the point of collapse, would be pushed by the North to the end.

CHAPTER X

REVOLUTION AND COLLAPSE

I

THE Confederacy now became a vast stage with Davis occupying the center, and every event brought to him a harbinger of disaster like the Nuntius of the classical drama rushing in again and again to pile woe after woe upon the breaking protagonist. The news of Hood's defeat and the loss of Atlanta came, in spite of the ease with which even ordinary men had predicted them, as a crushing surprise; all the beautiful plans spun for him by his friend Bragg had toppled like a house of cards—for such they were. He was now utterly discredited, and the few friends he had left, like Cobb and Barnwell, were discredited with him: the people had lost faith in Davis and all his works. The mutterings of the summer had turned into howls of rage.

Now clearly, but not for the first time, the pedantic folly of the Montgomery Constitutional Convention of 1861 bore fruit; it had set up for six years a government that could not be removed without resorting to revolution. The disaffection of the people after September, 1864, has been interpreted as disgust with the war and desire for the old Union; but except for some feeling of this kind in a few places, the dissatisfaction was not with the war, but with the Davis government. Revolution was

in the air, and Joe Brown was helping to plot it. Since his moment of wisdom before the fall of Atlanta, he had lapsed into his more appropriate rôle. He shouted that his noble state would fight the South and the North together, to preserve her rights.

By the middle of September Brown resumed his carping, quibbling obstructing controversy with Davis, in defense of what he supposed to be State Rights. Now that Hood was defeated and the need for men was all the greater, he promptly recalled about 10,000 Georgia militia that were serving with the main army: he feared they would be taken from Georgia soil. Now that adversity had fallen upon the Confederacy at a whole, he instinctively fled the sinking ship, and thought only of Georgia. He nullified the conscription law by promising exemption to all men who had the slightest claim to civil service. He was vainly rebuked by Cobb for retaining twenty justices of the peace and twenty constables in each county. Atlanta being lost and the militia having been lent only for the city's defense, they must "return to their homes and look for a time after important interests." Brown was now hysterical in his antagonism to the Davis government: after disbanding his own militia, he demanded of Seddon strong reinforcements and threatened, in case they did not appear, to withdraw the Georgia regiments from Lee's army. Sherman was so encouraged by the anti-Davis agitation of Brown and of Stephens (who still believed that violation of the Constitution had brought all the recent disasters), that he tried to open peace negotiations with them for the surrender of Georgia. It came to nothing; but Brown afterwards wrote to Stephens that "It keeps the door open," and one can only surmise that Brown's ignorant hysteria and

Stephens's doctrinaire fanaticism had led them to the verge of treason.

The revolutionary sentiment was of two kinds: the first was like Brown's, which meant the reduction of the central government to impotence by consistent obstruction of all its policies—a procedure that was certain to make disaster complete; and, then, there was the growing belief in the Lower South that the people there were being neglected. As early as 1863, the Governor of Louisiana had said that his people were sorry they had not struck out for independence alone! In the months after the fall of Atlanta Governor Magrath of South Carolina took a step that might have led to a Lower Southern Confederacy, or at least to a league with Virginia left out. Foreseeing that Lee would have to abandon Petersburg and Richmond, he argued that the Virginia troops would refuse to follow him out of their state, and the military power of the southeastern and gulf states should be reorganized independently of Davis. State conscription laws were promptly passed in South Carolina which kept Lee's army from getting its quota of men. The anti-Davis journals, particularly the *Mercury,* made it clear that their quarrel was with the autocracy of Davis; they were still determined to fight the Yankees to a successful end. The *Mercury* boldly cried out for Lee to become dictator and to depose Davis; otherwise the Confederacy could not be saved.

Now Vance, to whom Magrath had made his proposal of a Lower Southern league, cannily evaded that issue, and asked Magrath what he thought of a demand for the restoration of General Johnston and the appointment of Lee to "full and absolute command of all the forces of the Confederacy." This, indeed, was ominous, for it was not an isolated thought; it filled the

minds of people all over the South. Cobb, who was Davis's friend through thick and thin, informed Davis that "By accident I have become possessed of the facts in connection with the proposed action of the Governors of certain States." He said that the cry for General Johnston was irresistible. Earlier in the year Stephens, in an incredible letter to Herschel J. Johnson, expressed his opinion of Davis: "While I do not and have never regarded him as a great man or a statesman on a large scale, or a man of any marked genius, yet I have regarded him as a man of good intentions, weak and vacillating, timid, petulant, peevish, obstinate, but not firm. Am now beginning to doubt his good intentions. . . . His whole policy on the organization and discipline of the army is perfectly consistent with the hypothesis that he is aiming at absolute power."

An example of the absolute power that Davis aimed at was the attempt of the Confederate government to regulate food prices and to protect the public from the extortionists who were making four hundred per cent or more. This was bitterly opposed, even by the people who were being robbed, as a usurpation of the central government! Governor William Smith of Virginia, finding that rice sold in the market at two dollars and a half a pound, bought up rice and offered it to the public at fifty cents, which included a profit. However, Smith was attacked by the Constitutional fiddlers at the burning of the Confederate Rome. The regulation of prices was an invasion of State Rights, the iron policy of ambitious politicians, "men whose ambitious designs," in the words of the Georgia peace resolutions of 1864, "would need cover under the ever-recurring plea of the necessities of war." Stephens justified his part in the peace resolutions on the ground that they would work against Lincoln's reëlection, making a

"deep impression upon the minds of all true friends of Constitutional liberty" in the North. As if the people North or South at the moment cared a fig for anything but victory in the war!

Against this background of dissension, cross-purpose, recrimination, and despair, Jefferson Davis began acting out his part in the last scene of a drama, not of his own choice, but, as we have seen, largely of his making. The drama was moving swiftly to its end. On the 28th of September, 1864, "President Davis arrived quite unexpectedly" at Macon, Georgia, for the last time to appeal to the people of the West and to direct the army to victory.

2

This, Davis's third and final visit to the West, was attended everywhere by the most discouraging signs. In his first speech, delivered at the Macon Baptist Church, he openly referred to the hostile criticism he had received, and denounced the man (whoever he was) who said that he had left Georgia to her fate: "Miserable man. The man who uttered this was a scoundrel." Since the whole population of Georgia shared the man's belief, Davis's defense was not phrased in a way to dispel it. It was characteristically tactless; though it was equally well-meant. In his agony and his isolation from the people, he had lost all grasp of the popular mind. He was now like the nervous man who, having dropped a tea-cup, breaks all the china in the effort to recover it.

But, as always, his chief concern was the army. He held long and repeated conferences with Hood: what could be done? He could hardly have believed at this time that Hood was the gen-

eral to conduct a successful campaign against Sherman, for he virtually admitted his loss of faith by appointing the still popular Beauregard to the command of the department, in which position Beauregard nominally outranked Hood. Hood himself was aware that he had been a failure, and he offered to resign. Here Davis had a perfect opportunity to dispose of him without doing violence to his own pride; but he would not seize it. He had elevated Hood, and he was too stubborn to admit his mistake: if the public had favored Hood he might have removed him, but he would not let opposition dictate to him. Again he did not know what to do, beyond the harrowing awareness that something must be done. In Hood's camp the men cried out, "Give us General Johnston!"

Once more the press saw in his western trip a step towards autocracy. On October 10th he made an excellent speech at Augusta; but in an effort to compliment General Beauregard for his loyalty he overreached himself: "He goes with a single purpose to serve wherever I direct, asking no particular place . . . but in the spirit that made a general a corporal, [goes] where I say . . ." Davis meant only that Beauregard unselfishly served the cause (as he did), but the *Mercury* pounced on the remark, comparing Davis to the Russian Emperor and describing the words as "insulting to General Beauregard . . . false and presumptuous in the President."

The President wished Hood to fight a battle on the Georgia-Tennessee border, having at last adopted Johnston's strategy of falling on Sherman's communications. Hood was to march north in the belief that Sherman would be compelled to follow him, and thus Georgia would be relieved; but unfortunately Davis, trying to reanimate the people, announced the plan to Sherman,

who until then had been in some doubt as to what he should do: Davis's speech was immediately put in Sherman's hands.

At last, after Atlanta was already lost, Forrest's plan was adopted. Hood marched north, tearing up Sherman's railroad communications, and expected Sherman to pursue him. This Sherman did—at a distance; then he decided to ignore Hood and continue his march through Georgia. Before him now lay the low-country, the granary of the Confederacy, and he no longer needed his line of supplies; he could easily reach Savannah and the Federal fleet, living meanwhile on the country. The world knows how well he accumplished this. Hood's action was simply insane—a defeated army marching into territory held by the enemy, whose main army was left to its own devices in the rear. "The movement," says Mr. Eckenrode, "was comic opera generalship." Sherman pursued Hood until he saw that Hood would not fight; then he contemptuously turned southward upon his main business.

Hood advanced into Tennessee, hoping that he could defeat the small Union army there under General Thomas. What he hoped beyond this is not known. He was merely striking out blindly. Had he been able to defeat Thomas, he could not have held Tennessee or marched into Kentucky; he was too weak, and inevitable retreat would have confronted him, at the end of which stood Sherman. Hood was caught between two fires. It had been worse than folly to attempt the forcing of a retreat from Sherman after he was no longer opposed by the main Confederate army. The situation beautifully illustrated the chief military weakness of Davis: he waited to execute a wise plan until it was too late, for Hood's attempt to break Sherman's communication,

under impossible conditions, was suicide. It had not one chance of success.

Hood's army, the moment he left Sherman, was, for all effective purposes in the West, extinguished; there was nothing for it to do but disintegrate. The one remaining chance left the South lay in the union of Hood with Lee, who might thus have been able to defeat Grant. This plan was not considered, and there is no way to find out what Davis might have thought of it. It is, however, safe to infer that he could not willingly have brought himself to give up the western territory, since the mere physical existence of an army there, broken and ill-led though it was, permitted him to cherish the illusion that he still could hold it. At this time he was still appointing generals to departments and keeping up, on paper, the pleasant fiction that they existed!

Hood plunged headlong into Tennessee towards Nashville. The one great opportunity of the campaign was thrown away. A large part of the Union army, near Franklin, marched in the night over a road completely commanded by the Confederates, who could hear the tramp of the marching feet. They were permitted merely to listen, and the Federals got away. At Franklin Hood found them strongly fortified; so he hurled his army against the fortifications. The Confederates won, but at a bloody sacrifice. By the middle of December Hood was in front of Nashville, with not more than 25,000 men, while Thomas was intrenched with 40,000. Hood, hesitating to attack, sat down before the city and, because he did not know what else to do, waited for Thomas to attack him, which he speedily did. After a fierce but hopeless resistance the Confederates were driven off with terrible losses, and fled south to the Tennessee River. In desperately cold weather, half-starving and in rags, the remnant

of less than 20,000 doggedly fought off the pursuing Federal cavalry, and after the bitterest hardship reached Tupelo, Mississippi, in January. The retreat was one of the greatest exploits of the war, for only devotion to the country held together an army wrecked by incompetence and folly. Thus ended the belated strategy which was to frustrate Sherman—who on Christmas day captured Savannah and started north through the Carolinas like a moving volcano.

Hood resigned. And the news of the disasters in Tennessee conspired with the reports of Sherman's pillage to smite the President at his darkest hour. By December the prospect of certain defeat had made him ill: physically he was a broken man; tortured by neuralgia, stung to the quick by his enemies, eaten, perhaps secretly, by regret. But on the new year he returned to his office duties, there to pore with fierce intensity over his futile military details; he had no future, no schemes, no hope. Yet he bore himself with all the outward calm of a master of men. Perhaps his perception of the impending catastrophe had become remote and mechanical—like a geometrical figure, which one can recognize without letting it disturb a prior and irrelevant state of mind. He had yielded not an inch to his enemies; there was perversity in this, and it was bringing him to ruin; but the proud stoicism of his bearing, of his willingness to take the responsibility, proves that he was a man of powerful character, held up almost by will alone. Calmly and regularly, accompanied by his secretary, Burton Harrison, he still rode out to the camps of Lee's army, which was melting away under his eyes. But he had not given up. He was not a great soldier; as President he had been repudiated; but to the end he was, in his own being, a great man.

3

Sherman's march north through the Carolinas progressed relentlessly, but it was not this that was bringing the South to ruin. It was the lack of a magnetic national leader. The spirit of resistance was not dead; it was paralyzed by distrust of the government. The need of the hour was a revolutionary leader who would call the people to arms, trample on law and government, and conduct a people's war. It is a great mistake to suppose that the South had no chance to win. If ever in history a people fighting for national existence had reason to expect success, those people were the inhabitants of the Southern states. All things considered—the military talent; the resources of self-support which the blockade could not touch; the vastness of the country that the Federal armies had to conquer; the united resistance of the plain people, who grew even closer together as the war went on—these facts would have made victory no miracle, while defeat, had the South been properly led, would be difficult to explain.

The South at the end of 1864 had a great leader whom the people would have followed to the death—Robert E. Lee. The previous agitation to make him dictator now rose to a clamor, and now it reached Congress. There is a story, perhaps no more than a legend, that Rives of Virginia, representing a junta of the Congress, secretly approached Lee with the offer to make him dictator; he was now the real head of the people acting as a subordinate to a government which the people did not recognize. But he was not the legal head, and of course, if the offer ever came to him, he turned it down. We can guess what Lee's reasons would have been. It is possible that he did not wish to assume

the responsibility of a cause already lost, but it is not probable; he may have had hope of success at the beginning of 1865—hope, at least, of prolonging the war—for he expected to be able to unite with the fragmentary army Hood had further shattered, which now comes upon the scene again. Lee would not have made himself dictator nor accepted the rôle simply because of all the objects of respect he respected constituted authority most. He had not resigned from the United States army in 1861 to set up a state, nor to win a war, nor to rise to power; he had resigned to do his duty. He was neither a Cromwell nor a Caesar.

But the agitation did not cease. Congress had decided that Davis could do nothing, and they were determined to take the military direction out of his hands. Since the armies were now his sole concern—finances, diplomacy, all other executive functions having disappeared—this meant virtually deposing him. About the middle of January the Congress passed a bill creating the office of commanding general of all the Confederate armies, and on the very next day the legislature of Virginia resolved that "the appointment of General Robert E. Lee to the command of all the Armies of the Confederate States would promote their efficiency and operate powerfully to reanimate the spirits of the Armies . . . and to inspire increased confidence in the final success of our cause." When this resolution reached the President he found attached to it another, which requested him to restore Johnston to the western army. Then Thomas S. Bocock, Speaker of the House of the Congress, told Davis that the real object of these attacks was the Cabinet. Davis even now, instead of gracefully yielding, vigorously denied the legal right of Congress to interfere with his Cabinet; but Seddon took it upon himself to resign, although Davis tried to dissuade him. Here was the Presi-

dent saying that Congress had no *constitutional right* to remove his Cabinet!

In the struggle over the Cabinet Davis came off well, for he retained all the members, even the ever-hated Benjamin, except Seddon: on the military issue he conducted himself with great adroitness and composure. He pretended to see in the demand for Lee merely the wish to have Lee made his military adviser, as he had been in 1862, and he replied to the Virginia delegation that he had always been willing to use Lee's advice when he could be spared from the field! At this, the opposition was greatly nonplussed, for they aimed at depriving Davis of all military power. The President's suave reply, however, only concealed the intense bitterness with which he had received the resolutions; he could not hide from himself their meaning; and Mrs. Davis's remark on the Congressional coercion of her husband may be fairly said to be a reflection of his own mind: "I think I am the proper person to advise Mr. Davis and, if I were he, I would die or be hung before I would submit to the humiliation."

But submit to the humiliation he did, for on January 26th he signed a bill creating a commander-in-chief, and immediately gave the position to Lee. But that other humiliation, the restoration of Johnston, he would not bear. Lee now used his new authority to order Johnston back to the western army, and yet he gave not the slightest approval to the anti-Davis movement that had given him the authority. In his reply to Davis he implied a severe rebuke to Davis's enemies: "I am indebted alone to the kindness of His Excellency, the President, for my nomination to this high and arduous office."

Johnston took command of an army mustering not more than 30,000 men which could only observe the cyclonic Sherman at a

safe distance. The promotion of Lee affected the military policy of the government not at all, for Lee did not assert his authority, and Davis continued to direct. Because Johnston seemed to confront Sherman the illusion was still possible that the whirlwind was being checked: not even now was there any real attempt to unite Johnston's army with Lee's at Petersburg. Lee had suggested that it might be wise to give up Richmond and combine his army with Johnston's in North Carolina, but Davis, to whom the possession of the capital had become a symbol that permitted him to shut out the terrible reality of affairs, would not consent. In this plan lay the last forlorn hope of the Confederacy. But so long as he held Richmond he could feel a certain security in the daily government routine. The military departments—on paper—were intact; and as late as March, 1865, the scattered garrisons, some of them, like Richard Taylor's, well-equipped, would have made an army of 100,000 men. In the last critical agony the machinery of an ordered government that had not won the title to its establishment continued to operate, and in a vacuum.

4

Davis could not have known how desperate his situation was, and yet he knew that it was critical. Late in 1864 the question of arming the slaves came up more urgently than before. Davis, in his overpowering sense of the need to strengthen the armies, from which the deserters numbered a hundred thousand, favored this extreme measure, and set about cautiously to get it adopted. If the point were carried, it would be the most revolutionary step of all, for it meant the abolition of slavery.

The variety of prejudice against Negro soldiers was so great

that it was almost impossible to frame a policy regarding them so that it would meet all objections and yet be effective. There was prejudice in the army; men said they would lay down their arms rather than fight with Negroes; and officers had all along said that it was "contrary to all true principles of chivalric warfare." Some were willing for them to fight, but unwilling to give them freedom; people everywhere saw the futility of asking the blacks to fight for their own bondage. One of the greatest difficulties was the question of State Rights! The war had been brought about by the determination of the South to keep the matter of domestic institutions in the hands of the separate states; it would be both inconsistent and revolutionary to permit the Richmond government to take over the slave population for any purpose, particularly a purpose that led to emancipation. Rhett, who had been silent since 1863, rebuked the government for its desire to infringe upon the rights of the states. R. M. T. Hunter, hitherto friendly to the administration, asked why the South was fighting if not to protect its property in slaves. In Congress the wrangling became incoherent and, we may suppose, eminently unphilosophical. Sheer prejudice was contented to repeat that "niggers won't fight." But perhaps the principal objection at this time grew out of the now incredible belief that Davis was scheming to surround himself with military power so great that he could suppress the liberties of the people. An army of slaves, long schooled in docility, would be an invincible weapon in the hand of an unscrupulous and designing autocrat. So the harangue continued while Sherman advanced.

The issue had three sides. Should the Negroes be armed on any condition? If so, should that condition be freedom at the end of military service?—an inducement to the Negro to fight.

Lastly, should the central government or the separate state governments take the problem in hand?

The Governor of Virginia, William Smith, assuming that the states should act, urged in no uncertain terms the arming of the Negroes. "Can we," he asked, "hesitate, can we doubt, when the question is, whether the enemy shall use our slaves against us or we use them against him?" This was, indeed, the issue. Still the Congress debated.

Now a State Senator of Virginia went to Lee for his opinion, which was both astonishing and acute. He too believed that the states, not the central government, should take action, but aside from this his support was unqualified; repeating Smith's argument, he went on to say that the emergency was so pressing as to render the question of "slavery immaterial" and that to "secure the efficiency and fidelity of this auxiliary force" the measure should be accompanied by "a well-digested plan of gradual and general emancipation. As that will be the result of the continuance of the war, and will certainly occur if the enemy succeed, it seems to me most advisable to adopt it at once. . . . " He ended his letter with these ominous words:

> . . . Whatever measures are to be adopted should be adopted at once. Every day's delay increases the difficulty. Much time will be required to organize and discipline the men, and action may be deferred until it is too late.

This letter, dated January 11, 1865, was as far as Lee would interfere in Virginia state politics: probably, had he been more active, the Virginia slaves would have been armed forthwith, and the example followed in other states. But Lee would be neither politician nor dictator. After a month of further wrangling Virginia

passed a bill *permitting* slaves to be armed, but not a word was said about their emancipation. Not even Lee could unseat the power of race prejudice.

In Congress the Negro soldiery became the battleground over which Davis and his enemies were to fight for the last time. The President found that his friend Hunter was "the chief obstacle" to the passage of the bill in the Senate because it contained provision for manumission, and the bill was indefinitely discussed, indefinitely put off. At this time a compromise bill was put through the House, but before it passed its supporters again asked Lee for his sanction, which he again gave. Yet he was very explicit upon the question of state action, and it was doubtless his opinion that united all parties in the act of March 9th, 1865. After more than two months of futile controversy, the act to arm the slaves empowered the President to ask for them; but that was all.

Davis could "ask for and accept from the owners of slaves" as many as he needed, but "nothing in this act shall be construed to authorize a change in the relation which the said slaves shall bear toward their owners. . . . " The government was given no drafting power whatever, and the Negro no inducement to fight. Not a single colored soldier reached the firing line. Pollard described the recruiting of the blacks with his usual exaggeration: "Two companies of blacks, organized from some Negro vagabonds in Richmond, were allowed to give balls in Libby Prison and were exhibited in fine fresh uniforms . . . as decoys to obtain recruits. But the mass of their colored brethren looked on with unenvious eyes, and little boys exhibited the early prejudices of race by pelting the fine uniforms with mud." This picture was not far from true.

In these last terrifying months Davis had anticipated the law sanctioning the arming of the slaves by sending a secret emissary to Europe with power to promise abolition in exchange for intervention. This was the boldest step of his entire career, and as was the case with most of his plunges it came too late. At last he had realized how powerful was the anti-slavery feeling in England. His plan was evidently to get the European powers to promise intervention and then to give the people a choice between intervention and success, without slavery, on the one hand, and failure, without slavery too, on the other.

Early in January, 1865, Duncan J. Kenner passed in disguise through the lines to New York, where he sailed for France. In Paris he held a conference with Mason and Slidell, and Mason at once went to England to announce what seemed to him an important decision to Lord Palmerston, to whom he said: " . . . If the President was right in his impression that there was some latent, undisclosed obstacle on the part of Great Britain to recognition, it should be frankly stated, and we might, if in our power to do so, consent to remove it." Mason reported that Palmerston was "conciliatory and kind" but denied that there was any unspoken reason for refusing recognition. Mason talked to Lord Donoughmore, who told him that the South would probably have been recognized when Lee invaded Pennsylvania if it had not been for slavery. Mason wrote, in his report to Benjamin, dated March 26th, 1865—a report that was never officially received—that Donoughmore said that, even if slavery were done away with now, the time for recognition had gone by, "especially that our fortunes seemed more adverse than ever."

The North had been invaded too late; a cotton loan had been raised too late; the offensive in the West had been tried too late;

Bragg was removed too late; Johnston was restored too late; the Negroes were armed too late; abolition of slavery was offered to Europe too late. And yet Davis was not directly responsible for all of these mistakes. Even the dispersive military system, in spite of the fact that he preferred it, was demanded by the feeling that underlay the doctrine of State Rights; every small community cried out for tangible protection day after day regardless of disaster in main centers of war.

And now the President saw no one but by special appointment. Events were like a stone rolling from the crest of a mountain towards a cliff, steadily piling up momentum, till it reaches the brink and plunges to the abyss below. Davis was powerless to stop it. He could only look on with unseeing eyes. A pall was spreading over Richmond. Still the President, erect, dignified, walked through the Capitol Square. At the White House Mrs. Davis could barely serve a complete meal. Long ago she had sold her carriage horses because she could not feed them on her husband's salary—which the *Examiner* had said would make him rich.

5

In the midst of the confusion of the last months the figure of Alexander H. Stephens appears for the last time, still nobly ignorant of reality, still convinced that Davis was a monster, still devoted to a peace that he thought could be had for the mere asking. In January the peace movements of the summer of 1864 gathered in power. At the time that Lee supposedly was rejecting the dictatorship, and Vance and Magrath were feeling the way towards withdrawing from the Upper South, Congressman Boyce of South Carolina was a leader of those fanatics who deluded

themselves that the South could reënter the Union on its own terms, and that Davis, out of lust for power, kept up a useless war. Stephens was in favor of "an armistice allowing the states to adjust themselves as suited their interests. If it would be to their interests to reunite, they would do so." Nearly four years of war had not affected him at all; he could not see that the North was and had been bent upon the conquest of the South since 1862. He still thought the armies were fighting over State Rights —because he was fighting for them. After four years of blood and pillage he expected the Northern hunger for the spoils of victory to be appeased with talk. He could not see the visible proof that Lincoln meant what he said—coercion of the South back to the Union.

In January Lincoln sent or permitted Francis P. Blair to go to Richmond on a peace mission. Blair proposed reunion and abolition, and an expedition against Maximilian in Mexico to uphold the Monroe Doctrine, with Davis as the leader of the campaign. The Confederate House of Representatives was infatuate enough to hear to a bill approving the scheme. But Davis merely replied to Blair that he was willing to negotiate peace between the "two countries." The real purpose of Blair was to take the temperature of the Confederate leaders—which he found to be very low. So Lincoln's reply to Davis through Blair was that he was eager for peace in "our one common country." Jefferson Davis would not deceive himself with the belief that the North intended to let the South off short of utter subjugation; he knew it was either that or victory.

There were mutterings that Blair had offered attractive proposals, and Stephens, supposing that Davis was rejecting them because he wished to cling to his military tyranny, demanded that

they be considered again. (It was an alarming autocracy that had been forced, quite futilely, to arm the slaves.) So Davis, utterly disillusioned, appointed Stephens, R. M. T. Hunter, and John A. Campbell as a commission to meet Lincoln and Seward in conference. On the 3rd of February, 1865, on a small steam-boat in Hampton Roads off Fortress Monroe, the peacemakers talked for five or six hours—at the end of which Lincoln went away with the conviction that the war was nearly over. The Confederates had betrayed their despair. Hunter and Campbell would not consent to peace without victory—neither would Lincoln. Between the two views the fantasy of Stephens, held with incredible ferocity for four years, collapsed. He returned to Richmond, wiser but not chastened; so he ended his career as an unwilling Confederate by abandoning the government and going home to Georgia. The President had disposed of Stephens and his peacemakers only to put to the proof his own accurate judgment of the policy of the North, and to confirm beyond hope his own despair.

But did he really despair? The grotesque failure of the peace conference forced upon all men the hard truth that they must fight or submit, and the determination to fight now hardened into something like mania in Jefferson Davis. On the evening of the 6th of February, three days after the Hampton Roads Conference, a tremendous crowd gathered at the African Church, and the President, rising amid profound silence, made the greatest speech of his career: "Let us then unite our hands and our hearts, lock our shields together, and we may well believe that before another summer solstice falls upon us, it will be the enemy that will be asking us for conferences and occasions in which to make known our demands."

The crowd was carried to immense enthusiasm . . . but only for a while. In a few weeks it died.

6

Towards the end of March Mr. Davis told his wife that she and the children must leave Richmond and go to Charlotte, North Carolina. He gave her a pistol, and showed her how to load it, aim it, and fire it. He said: "You can at least, if reduced to the last extremity, force your assailants to kill you, but I charge you solemnly to leave when the enemy are approaching. If you cannot remain undisturbed in our own country, make for the Florida coast and take a ship there for a foreign country."

Mrs. Davis did not want to be separated from him and pleaded to be allowed to stay, but he said that his headquarters might be in the field from now on, and the presence of his family would only embarrass and grieve him, instead of comforting him. "If I live," he told her, "you can come to me when the struggle is ended, but I do not expect to survive the destruction of constitutional liberty."

He gave her a roll of Confederate bills, and a small sum in gold, all the money he had except a five-dollar gold piece. Mrs. Davis hurriedly made her preparations for departure. The house was left just as it was—Davis would not even allow her to take along two barrels of flour which she had just bought. "You cannot remove anything in the shape of food from here," he said, "the people want it, and you must leave it here."

The trunks packed, Mrs. Davis, her children, and George A. Trenholm's daughters, were to set out on their journey under the escort of Burton Harrison. As they left the house, ten-year-old

Maggie clung convulsively to her father while little Jeff said that he would not leave him. Davis's stern composure almost gave way for a moment. He stooped and gently put aside the children's clinging hands, then stood erect, composed for the leave-taking. He was convinced that he was looking his last upon his family; he did not expect to survive the Confederacy.

On the first day of April he wrote to General Lee: "The question is often asked me Will we hold Richmond, to which my only answer is, if we can, it is purely a question of military power. The distrust is increasing and embarrasses in many ways." There was no loss of self-control, no surrender to regret; only weariness, and the calm resolution to see it out. In the same letter to Lee, he said: "Last night we had rumors of a general engagement on your right; your silence in regard to it leads to the conclusion that it was unwarranted."

Lee's army, starving and in rags while warehouses full of clothing and supplies of food lay at the far ends of broken railways, was now reduced to 30,000 men holding a line thirty miles long. Grant faced them with 120,000.

The 2nd of April was Sunday and the President went in the morning to Saint Paul's Church. Dr. Minnigerode was delivering his sermon. A messenger came in and handed Jefferson Davis a piece of paper. It was a telegram from Lee. It said that Grant had broken the Confederate line at Five Forks, that Richmond must be evacuated. The rumor was not unwarranted. The President quietly and deliberately rose, and with perhaps only a slightly quickened step left the church.

CHAPTER XI

FLIGHT

I

ALL Sunday afternoon President Davis collected and arranged his papers, having sent word to his Cabinet officers that the government would leave at the earliest possible moment for Danville, Virginia, towards which town Lee was retreating with Grant close upon his track. As the afternoon wore on, people began collecting in the streets; gangs of homeless Negroes and destitute whites gathered at street corners, in aimless expectancy. At last word came to the President that his train was ready. As he walked through the streets, people asked him if it was true that Richmond would be given up. He said yes; but that "we shoul[d] under better auspices again return." The people said: "If the success of the cause requires you to give up Richmond, we are satisfied." The government went.

Throughout the afternoon wagons drawn by gaunt horses and mules rumbled along the cobbled streets towards the bridges leading to the southwest. Men on horseback galloped furiously to and fro. A long procession of weary-looking people, carrying bundles of every size, steadily poured over the bridges into the town of Manchester and into the open country beyond. Darkness fell. The number of refugees seemed to decrease. Night completely enveloped the doomed city; not a light shone from the houses; all

doors were barred and windows shuttered. The clatter of squads of retreating Confederate horsemen broke the dull roar of the mobs now roaming the streets. Hoarse cries and the crashes of broken glass reached the ears of people huddled in the shuttered houses. At intervals explosions shook the earth, followed by flames leaping into the dark.

At dawn of April 3rd three of the great bridges over the James were in flames; warehouses and factories on the banks of the river, now on fire, were crumbling to ashes. At short, irregular intervals, magazines exploded, throwing bricks and dust into the air; piles of cartridges caught fire, rattling and crackling like a great battle, in the midst of the seething hiss of the fires rapidly sweeping away the lower part of the city.

A yelling mob of several thousands hung about 14th and Cary Streets, where stood a large storehouse full of army supplies. Early in the morning they battered down the doors. Barrels of bacon, flour, hams, sugar, coffee, whiskey quickly filled the streets. The hunger-driven mob fought like maniacs for the plunder. Other crowds forced open the stores of clothing and blankets. The gutters ran with whiskey; men, women, and children guzzled it. The flames came nearer, and the warehouses began to burn. The mob scattered to other fields of pillage. The yellow waters of the "classic James," rolling over the falls and moving steadily towards Jamestown and the sea, sparkled in the sun against a lurid background of dull smoke and fire.

At the one remaining bridge a small guard stood ready with pine firebrands—the last of the defenders of the city. A long wagon-train dashed at a gallop down the street and over the bridge. The guard still waited. A heavy column of Confederate cavalry swung out of a side street towards the bridge, and clat-

tered across to the other side of the river. The guard set the bridge on fire, and followed.

In the distance, on the south side of the river, the last Confederates disappeared over the crest of a hill, just as a squad of blue horsemen rode down Main Street in pursuit. The Federals halted before the burning bridge. Other squads filled the streets. Then dense masses of Union infantry, their bayonets glistening through the smoke, marched through the streets, without end. Wild cheers burst forth as they reached Capitol Square. Richmond, after four years of bloody war, had fallen at last.

In Capitol Square terrified people stared at their conquerors as if they expected to be killed. Whole families clung together in the midst of their household stuffs—tables, chairs, picture frames, candlesticks, blankets, trunks. An old man sat wearily on the ground, holding a lamp. On a horsehair sofa under a large tree a young girl lay, face down.

By nightfall the Union General Weitzel had got the mobs and fires under control, and began issuing rations to the famished people.

Next day, April 4th, a tall, bony man wearing a long black cape and a stovepipe hat, followed by a squad of marines, walked along East Clay Street. His gait shambling but alert, he gazed with intense curiosity at everything around him. Meeting a Union officer, he asked: "Is it far to President Davis's house?" He was told that it was only a few minutes away. The tall man passed on. He came to the house, now the headquarters of General Weitzel, and went in. As he sat down in Jefferson Davis's office, he said: "This must have been President Davis's chair," then crossing his legs looked abstractedly into space. Suddenly he looked up and enquired if the housekeeper were in. She was not in. "Come,"

he said, "let's look at the house!" He looked at all the rooms, even the bedrooms, with childlike curiosity, while an officer told him gossip that he had picked up from the housekeeper. General Weitzel arrived, and Abraham Lincoln grew serious again.

2

The Capital had fallen, but in the opinion of Jefferson Davis the Confederacy had not. After a slow trip on the crippled Richmond and Danville Railroad the Confederate government arrived in Danville on April 3rd. The Cabinet members found quarters where they could, but the President was received in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sutherlin, where he remained for a week. In this time he anxiously looked about for offices suitable for the temporarily dispossessed government, for it was his intention to keep the capital of the Confederate States, if possible, on Virginia soil.

A strange calm had come over him since he had left Richmond, a certain blind optimism at the lowest ebb of his career —a proud and unyielding confidence that, in spite of the catastrophe surrounding him, he was now about to succeed. So, on April 5th, he issued his most stirring and his last appeal to the people:

> The General-in-Chief found it necessary to make such movements of his troops as to uncover the capital. It would be unwise to conceal the moral and material injury to our cause resulting from the occupation of our capital by the enemy. It is equally unwise and unworthy of us to allow our own energies to falter, and our efforts to become relaxed under reverses, however calamitous they may be. . . .
>
> We have now entered upon a new phase of the struggle. Relieved

from the necessity of guarding particular points, our army will be free to move from point to point, to strike the enemy in detail far from his base. Let us but will it, and we are free.

Animated by that confidence in your spirit and fortitude which never yet failed me, I announce to you, fellow-countrymen, that it is my purpose to maintain your cause with my whole heart and soul; that I will never consent to abandon to the enemy one foot of the soil of any of the States of the Confederacy. . . . Let us, then, not despond, my countrymen, but relying on God, meet the foe with fresh defiance, and with unconquered and unconquerable hearts.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

The dispersive system had been given up at last. The day after this address was issued, Ewell's corps of Lee's army, still in headlong flight, was surrounded at Sailor's Creek, and captured. The great Army of Northern Virginia, from sheer exhaustion, was melting away.

No news of Lee reached Danville. One day at the dinner table, Mr. Davis's hostess asked:

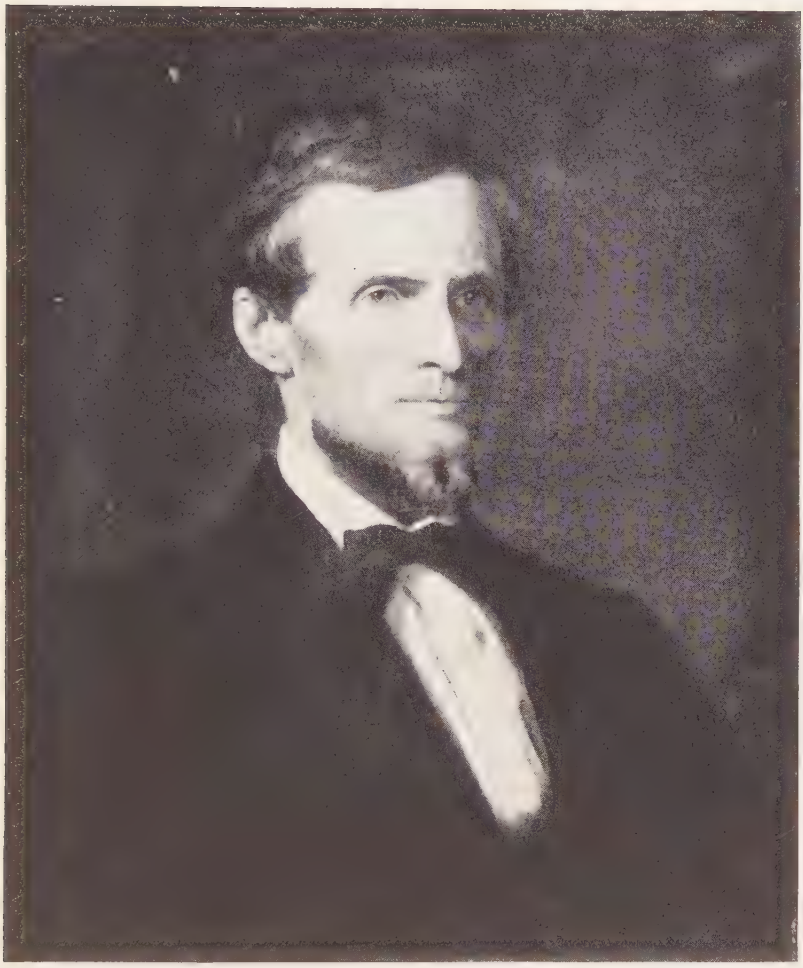
"Mr. Davis, would Lee's surrender end the war?"

"By no means," he replied. "We'll fight it out to the Mississippi River." Some of the Cabinet officers agreed to this.

The days passed, and the President had never seemed so poised or so self-confident. It was only a matter of time . . . a matter of time. He would fight to the end, beyond the end.

The days passed, and one morning a haggard youth arrived in Danville, dressed in a seedy looking Confederate officer's uniform and riding a broken-down horse. He asked for President Davis. . . .

Mr. Davis and Mr. Sutherlin came excitedly into the Sutherlin



Jefferson Davis

A recently discovered portrait, reproduced by courtesy
of the Confederate Museum in Richmond, Va.

house. Mrs. Sutherlin met them at the door, and the President said in a low tone, almost a whisper:

"Lee has surrendered. I must leave Danville immediately."

Within a few minutes he had gathered up his baggage, and was ready to go. Then he shook hands with Mrs. Sutherlin. She said:

"Mr. Davis, have you any funds other than Confederate money?"

He answered no.

"Then," Mrs. Sutherlin replied, "you must take this from me." She held out a bag containing two thousand dollars in gold.

He took the lady's hand again, tears in his eyes.

"No, I cannot take your money. You and your husband are young and will need your money, while I am an old man." (He was only fifty-six.) After a pause he added: "I don't reckon I shall need anything very long."

He reached into his pocket and took out a small gold pencil. Giving it to Mrs. Sutherlin, he asked her to take it as a keepsake. Then he turned, and walked away to the train. The cars were loaded with Cabinet officers, members of the Presidential staff, hangers-on, their families. The train started for Greensboro, North Carolina.

3

At Greensboro the Confederate government made its headquarters at the residence of Colonel John Taylor Wood, where the Cabinet met for the last time. In an upstairs bedroom all the members who remained were present—Mr. Mallory, Mr. Benjamin, Mr. Reagan, General Breckinridge, the last Secretary of War, and staff-officers. The room contained a bed, some small

chairs, a table with pen and ink. Presently there was a knock at the door.

General Johnston and General Beauregard entered, and after some casual talk the conference began. The President surveyed the gathering with a calm, unhurried eye, and seemed unmoved by the strangeness of his situation. He began with some remarks having no relation to the critical moment. He still seemed to see himself as the head of a powerful government, backed by immense resources, perfectly secure, unpressed by time. At last he looked at General Johnston and said: "Our late disasters have been terrible, but I do not think we should regard them as fatal. I think we can whip the enemy yet, if our people turn out. . . . Whatever can be done must be done at once. We have not a day to lose."

Johnston said nothing, and finally the President said: "We should like to hear your views, General Johnston."

The General spoke quickly, intensely, as if he were in anger: "My views are, sir, that our people are tired of the war, feel themselves whipped, and will not fight. . . . We cannot place another large army in the field. . . . My men are daily deserting in large numbers. . . . Since Lee's defeat they regard the war at an end. . . . I shall expect to retain no man beyond the by-road or cow-path that leads to his house. . . . We may perhaps obtain terms that we ought to accept."

During this speech Mr. Davis sat with his eyes fixed upon a scrap of paper on the table before him, which he was folding and refolding with careful abstraction, even after Johnston had ceased. He suddenly looked at Beauregard: "What do you say, General Beauregard?" His voice was low and measured. Beauregard replied: "I concur in all General Johnston has said."

It was agreed that a letter should be written to Sherman asking for terms, and Johnston asked the President to write it—which he did. The meeting broke up.

On the 14th of April the President was still at Greensboro, where he wrote to his wife:

Dear Winnie,

I will come to you if I can—Everything is dark—you should prepare for the worst by dividing your baggage so as to move in wagons. If you can go to Abbeville it seems best as I am now advised—If you can send everything there do so—I have lingered on the road and labored to little purpose—My love to the children and Maggie—God bless, guide, and preserve you, ever prays

Your most affectionate

Banny

I sent you a telegram but fear it was stopped on the road. . . .

On April 16th the Confederate government took to the road to go farther south. The President and his staff and most of the fast dwindling Cabinet rode their horses, but in the rear an ambulance bore the Secretary of State, Mr. Benjamin, his brother-in-law, Mr. de Saint-Martin, General Samuel Cooper, and George Davis, the Attorney General. The column moved day and night towards Charlotte—where the President hoped to find his wife and children—but the progress was slow, almost aimless, in spite of the President's desire to join the army in the Trans-Mississippi Department.

Mr. Burton Harrison was the indefatigable leader of the cavalcade. Once he had to ride back to get the Confederate government out of a mud-hole. In the long night rides Mr. Benjamin's cigar was the only light to glow, and his the only voice to break the heavy stillness:

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long, long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow. . . .
A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Though all men else their nobler dreams forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers. . . .

A few days later the party rose to find that the Secretary of State had disappeared, alone, to be heard from months afterwards in the land of the Iron Duke.

4

At Charlotte Mr. Davis found that his wife had gone to South Carolina; so he sent Mr. Harrison after her, to Abbeville, to arrange a place of meeting. The government was now somewhat unpopular; only with great difficulty could the party find lodgings; Stoneman's Federal cavalry had threatened to burn every house that received Jefferson Davis. In a few days a message arrived announcing the murder of President Lincoln, and the whole party expressed regret and surprise. Davis said to Colonel William Preston Johnston: "Mr. Lincoln would have been more useful to the Southern states than Andrew Johnson, his successor, is likely to be." At Charlotte, he made a speech—his last as President—to some troopers of General Basil Duke's cavalry, but he made not the slightest allusion to the death of Lincoln. He had no sympathy with whoever had committed the crime—the details of which at that time he did not know.

In Charlotte the President was extremely cheerful and agreeable. He had probably never been so amiable before. He talked

freely but with the ordinary restraint of a man enjoying casual social intercourse. No violent opinions escaped him. He was a revolutionist who had not flouted a single convention of either private or public morality, who had made war with rigid propriety, according to the strictest rules, who had taken to none of the extreme measures that his position, if followed by success, would have justified. He could say, indeed, that his enemy had violated the rules of "chivalric warfare," not he; he could say that Federal prisoners had starved and died in the South because their government had refused them food and medicines in spite of his consent to have them so supplied; he could say that this government had refused to accept as a gift thousands of their own imprisoned men, who were permitted to die at Andersonville in order to cast opprobrium on Southern humanity; and he could say that, in proportion to the numbers of Confederates taken as prisoners, more Southerners had died in the North than Federals in the South. He could say, in fact, that he had conducted a great war under terrible disadvantages with almost Quixotic honor. And he could say, as he actually did say at Charlotte, what was true of all men of honor in whatever circumstances:

"I cannot feel like a beaten man."

5

An armistice between Johnston and Sherman came to an end on April 24th because the Federal government would not ratify it: Sherman, having conquered the South, was willing to let the Southern states quietly resume their place in the Union, but his superiors denied his right to treat of political questions. When Davis heard this, he left Charlotte and began his slow, almost

leisurely march through South Carolina. Two members of his Cabinet had disappeared, but all his staff were there, and at his back rode about two thousand cavalry. More than a week passed, and at last on the 4th of May the Confederate government crossed the Savannah River into Georgia. At a house along the road some people were kind to the President; so he gave them his last coin —a five dollar gold-piece.

At Washington, Georgia, the President, lodging in the home of a Dr. Robinson, formally disbanded his Cabinet: he had heard of Johnston's surrender, which took place on the 26th of April, and he knew now that there was no further chance of resistance, or of getting agreeable terms from the Federal government. The Union had definitely won a complete conquest of the South. Should Davis have given up the struggle at the beginning of 1865, when he might have avoided the results of Reconstruction? He could not have done this; he could not see then that the South was defeated. Even now he resented Johnston's surrender, for he had hoped to bring off part of that army for a union with the forces west of the Mississippi. Mrs. Davis, when she heard that Johnston had given up the struggle, wrote to her husband. " . . . I cannot refrain from expressing my intense grief at the treacherous surrender of this Department." And Davis's own dislike of Johnston was mirrored in this sentiment.

About this time he wrote to his wife: "Dear wife, this is not the fate to which I invited [you] when the future was rose colored to us both; but I know you will bear it even better than myself, and that, of us two, I alone will ever look back reproachfully on my past career. . . . "

Federal cavalry were in close pursuit, and the people in the village of Washington urged the President to leave. At midnight

some of the Cabinet officers and others of the party took to the roads. Next morning, Mr. Davis was expected to leave at an early hour. He appeared to be not in the least hurried. "He was informed that Mrs. Davis was awaiting him at Raytown, but he must speak to the ladies who had called. He was informed that his horse was at the door, but he had to kiss the little children that were present. It was now nine o'clock. . . ." One man whispered to another, "I really believe that Mr. Davis wishes to be captured." At last, accompanied by Colonel Johnston, son of General Sidney Johnston, he walked in the most leisurely way down the front steps of Dr. Robinson's house, saying something appropriate to every one that approached him. He stood beside his horse, pausing to receive the good wishes and encouragement of one of his hosts. He said:

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

Then he mounted his horse, very slowly, "and, Colonel Johnston doing the same, the two passed out of the town with the painful slowness of mourners in a funeral procession . . . think of the high bearing, the granite firmness of the man. . . . "

For two days the President and his small mounted escort—the body of cavalry having dropped off—pushed farther towards the south, till news came that a band of ruffians, stragglers or paroled men, men of both armies, were pursuing his family; so he turned to the east, hoping to find them. One nightfall the horses of his guard broke down, but he pressed on with only Mr. Reagan and his personal staff.

The night was brilliantly moonlit, and just as the moon sank behind the trees, a voice hailed the President's party. He himself answered, and was greeted by Burton Harrison, who immediately took him to his family near the village of Irwinsville in Georgia.

He rode along with his family several days, but on the evening of May 10th he saddled his horse, inspected his pistols, and got ready to leave. One of his staff suddenly brought news that marauders intended to attack the camp that night, so he decided to wait until the alarm had passed. He lay down, fully dressed, in the tent. Harrison fell asleep outside on the ground. So the night passed.

At dawn Jim Jones, the free Negro coachman who had followed Mrs. Davis from Richmond, woke the whole camp with shouts that the enemy were upon them!

6

There was a crackle of rifle-fire. Harrison jumped to his feet, and saw a blue regiment, which was the 4th Michigan Cavalry, charging up the road from the direction opposite to the firing. In a moment Colonel Johnston was taken prisoner, and then Colonel Pritchard, the Union commander, halting his men, rode directly to Harrison and demanded, as he pointed across the creek whence the firing had come: "What does this mean? Have you any men with you?" "Of course we have," said Harrison. "Don't you hear the firing?" The Yankee seemed taken aback, so he ordered his men to charge towards the firing—which had come from other Federals across the creek. Meanwhile the camp was deserted, but for one Union trooper standing in front of the President's tent and a few who were lost in pillage of the wagons.

At the sound of the alarm the President rose. "I hope I still have influence enough with the Confederates to prevent your being robbed," he said to his wife. Then he looked outside, and saw the blue uniforms. Not wishing to leave Mrs. Davis alone,

he hesitated. His horse and pistols were in the road now held by the enemy; he could not reach them. He picked up a light rain-proof coat, a "raglan," and put it on—it was his wife's, but so nearly like his own that he took it. Mrs. Davis now urged him to get away. As he started out, she threw a shawl over his head to protect him from the dampness of early morning.

But Mrs. Davis went out first, saying something to the mounted man stationed at her tent. Harrison, being quick-witted, ran swiftly up to the soldier and after a few words actually persuaded him to go away, walking at the side of his horse down the road. The President suddenly came out of the far side of the tent and walked rapidly towards the woods, not glancing back.

The soldier whom Harrison had tricked looked round and, seeing that some one had left the tent, turned his horse back to the spot where he had been a moment before. Two other troopers joined him, and began speaking harshly and abusively to Mrs. Davis. The President, now about twenty yards away, overhearing the abuse, seemed to hesitate, but continued towards the woods. One of the soldiers saw him, and shouted, "Halt!"

The order was not obeyed. The man yelled again, "Halt!" And repeated it: "Halt!" still he was not obeyed. Then he raised his carbine and threatened to fire.

Mrs. Davis shrieked, and ran after her husband, who turned sharply and began walking fast back to the tent. He immediately reproached the soldiers for using ungentlemanly language to his wife. . . .

"Mr. Davis, surrender! I recognize you, sir!" . . .

The pillage began. Mrs. Davis's trunks were broken open, and a new hoop skirt taken out. A soldier, forcing a trunk with

the barrel of his carbine, shot off his own hand. After an hour the captives were started back towards Macon, towards Augusta, towards the casements of Fortress Monroe. The soldiers called Mr. Davis "Jeff."

It was said that Jefferson Davis had on his wife's hoops when he was captured—trying to escape in disguise. Thousands believed it then, and doubtless thousands believe it still.

CHAPTER XII

EPILOGUE

I

SO Jefferson Davis, and the Southern Confederacy, fell. And yet the leader of the Lost Cause lived on until 1889, proud to the end and never moving an inch from his convictions of 1861. His post-bellum life was an existence, not a career, and at times, in the terrors of Reconstruction, it was meager. The chronic neurotic of the sixties turned, as the years passed, into the fatherly maker of speeches at the laying of cornerstones, at the dedication of monuments, at religious meetings. He was presented with a comfortable home on the Gulf of Mexico, and he grew just a little fat. The fierce passions of his prime cooled to the gentle wisdom of the patriarch. He wrote letters, histories of the war; refuted slanders; argued with Joseph E. Johnston; visited England and France; snubbed Louis Napoleon for his double-handed policy with the South; came home and received, at last, the adoration of his people. He was the "President" until he died.

He deserved to be: he lay in Fortress Monroe, charged with treason, for two years, much of the time in chains, separated from his family and his friends. He became the sacrifice of the Southern people to the passions of the Northern mobs, whose leaders could hardly have let him off without a show of punishment. The lust of the crowd must be appeased. And yet the Federal govern-

ment knew not what to do with him. If he was a traitor, why was he not hanged? He was not even tried, although there were legal mummeries that were carefully gone through, and the crowd was pleased that a grand jury partly composed of Negroes was impanelled to indict him. The Federal government did not wish to try him. It could not run the risk of having its charge of treason turned into a legal vindication of secession; for such would probably have been the issue. The Federal government would have felt just a little ridiculous to have had set aside by a court what it had won by the sword. It was satisfied to take its victory and, as soon as a few minor hangings were accomplished, to let Jefferson Davis go.

From 1865 to 1889—twenty-four years of anti-climax, of death in life. Jefferson Davis died on May 11th, 1865.

2

What was the war about? That, in this story, has not been our great concern. Davis and Stephens believed that it was fought by the South for constitutional liberty, and this was doubtless right; that was one way of saying it because, politically, that was the South's defense. R. M. T. Hunter, of Virginia, and William Lloyd Garrison, of Massachusetts, believed that slavery was the cause of the War between the States: Hunter fought to protect slavery, Garrison to destroy it; and yet both of these slightly unphilosophical gentlemen were profoundly wrong. The North's real interest in abolishing slavery was in all respects identical with the interest of the United States, in 1917, in making the world safe for democracy. In 1816 the tariff issue became acute, and within five years Abolitionist societies were gathering in the

North. The relation between these two interesting phenomena may be a subject of dispute, but at the same time it is an object of suspicion.

The War between the States has a remote origin, and it cannot be understood apart from the chief movements of European history since the Reformation. It was another war between America and Europe, and "America," in the second great attempt, won. The South was the last stronghold of European civilization in the western hemisphere, a conservative check upon the restless expansiveness of the industrial North, and the South had to go. The South was permanently old-fashioned, backward-looking, slow, contented to live upon a modest conquest of nature, unwilling to conquer the earth's resources for the fun of the conquest; contented, in short, to take only what man needs; unwilling to juggle the needs of man in the illusory pursuit of abstract wealth. It is a mistake to suppose that the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781 freed "America" from the bonds of the European tradition: that somewhat mottled blessing required for its success one more surrender—that of Lee at Appomattox in 1865. The War between the States was the second and decisive struggle of the Western spirit against the European—the spirit of restless aggression against a stable spirit of ordered economy—and the Western won.

In a sense, all European history since the Reformation was concentrated in the war between the North and the South. For in the South the most conservative of the European orders had, with great power, come back to life, while in the North, opposing the Southern feudalism, had grown to be a powerful industrial state which epitomized in spirit all those middle-class, urban impulses directed against the agrarian aristocracies of Europe after

the Reformation. The transformation of Europe, its Americanization, within Europe, has been gradual, but the transformation of Europe in America was, because its two spiritual poles clashed here, sudden and dramatic.

The critical period in America arrived about 1830. The New England industrial system, although at first it was conservative and patriarchal, contained the seed of the Western spirit, and by 1840 its growth in the East was sufficiently rank to begin choking out those ways of feeling and living that New England no less than the South had inherited from Europe. The conquest of heaven became, without much abating its zeal, the conquest of brute nature—and in the end, as it often happens, the conqueror has capitulated to the enemy. Old New England is as dead as the Old South, but the Confederate veteran may pleasantly reflect, since he can do nothing else, that the South, at least, was not hoist upon its own petard.

However, as we have seen, the old agrarianism did not fall without a struggle. From April 2nd to April 9th, 1865, the men who had seen what was coming, and had decided that they might as well fight as be smothered, were sadly reduced, but they were not willing, the handful that still hung on, to quit. The army that had never been beaten on the field, that had beaten its enemy time and again, was not beaten at last. It collapsed—like the one-hoss shay.

THE END

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

This volume has been an attempt to unite, under a viewpoint not previously applied to Jefferson Davis, the features of two earlier biographies: *Jefferson Davis* by William E. Dodd, and *Jefferson Davis: President of the South,* by Hamilton James Eckenrode. Professor Dodd's book contains the best account of Davis's early political career, but it somewhat slights the complex political and military situation of the war. In Mr. Eckenrode's book the emphasis is reversed, and the two volumes taken together thus form the most satisfactory portrait of Davis that we have. Mr. Eckenrode is the first scholar to use extensively the rich material of the *Official Records* to illuminate the most important phase of Davis's presidency—the military. His results point to the momentous conclusion that the military policy of the South was mainly responsible for defeat. The present writer accepts this view. Mr. Eckenrode's narrative required revision in detail, but in general it is not likely to be refuted. Professor Walter Lynwood Fleming has written invaluable monographs on special aspects of Davis—Chapter III of this volume is a mosaic of certain of these—and it is to this distinguished historian that one must look for a monumental and definitive life of Davis. In so far as the general point of view of this volume is not the author's—in so far as it is indebted to influences too minute or too remote to be acknowledged—it is that of a book called *The American Heresy,* by Christopher Hollis. The book is incomplete and inaccurately documented, but it is the first effort to comprehend the supposedly mixed forces of American history under a single idea.

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INDEX

Atlanta, Confederacy beaten at moment of its fall, 261

Barnwell, Robert, on Davis as a poor politician but high character, 24; works for Davis's election, 26; turns down secretaryship of state, 88
Beauregard, General, authorized to demand evacuation of Fort Sumter, 99-100; most distinguished rhetorician, 108; his plan of attack vetoed by Lee, who later put it into effect, 109
Benjamin, Judah P., promotions in Davis's Cabinet, 89-90; attacked as President's most vulnerable spot, 123-24
Blockade, Federal, begins to take effect, 147-48; English discussion of, 162-63; effects of tightening, 211
Bragg, Braxton, discarded for Davis's Cabinet, 89; a disastrous example of Davis's policy of supporting his generals, 145-47; his part in 1863 disasters, 178-89, 197; his hatred for Johnston after Vicksburg, 198; Longstreet wins Chickamauga despite, 201-2; retained by Davis at cost of Longstreet and Army of Tennessee, 203-4; persuades Davis to authorize his "offensive defensive" campaign, 240-41; plots downfall of Johnston, 252-60
Brown, Governor Joe, his astute telegram urging use of Forrest, 254-55; rebuked by Davis, 256; turns hysterically against Davis, 263
Buchanan, President, considered as near traitor, 3; denounced in Senate by Davis and Trumbull, 4; burned in effigy, 97

Cabinet, Davis's choice of, 87-90
Calhoun, John C., contrasted on secession with R. B. Rhett, 10
Chancellorsville, 190-91
Charleston *Mercury,* calls for Lee as dictator and deposition of Davis, 264
Civil War, failures of "squatter sovereignty" the direct cause of, 80; meaning of the, 300-302
Cobb, Howell, "the sum of all evil" to an abolitionist, 19; elected chairman of Confederate Constitutional Convention, 22
Cobb, T. R. R., on Davis as "not great," 26
Conscript, letter to Davis from a, 237
Conscription, Davis responsible for its adoption by Confederacy, 132-36; Holden's campaign against, in North Carolina, 236; imperfect workings of, 238-39; state obstruction of, 263, 264
Constitution (Confederate), theoretical and unimaginative, 21
Constitution (U. S.), revered by Davis, 69
Constitutional Convention (Confederate), delegates to, 17-21; purposes of, 22; becomes Provisional Congress, 28
Cotton, Confederate finances based on, 95-96
"Cotton Kingdom, The," growth of, 29-48, 58
"Crackers," life of, 36
Criticisms, Davis's tenderness to, 148-50
Currency, depreciation of, 220, 233

Davis, Jefferson,
farewell to the Senate, 3-15
election to Confederate Presidency, 16-28

Davis, Jefferson—*Continued*
birth, ancestry, and childhood, 35, 51-59
education, 58-65
army service and marriage to daughter of his colonel (Zachary Taylor), 65-67
death of first wife, 68
period of seclusion and study, 69-71
as a planter, 71-72, 77
woos and wins Varina Howell, 74-76
enters politics, 77
leads crack regiment in Mexican War, 78-79
political record to Civil War, 79-81
Major-General of Mississippi, 6, 81-82
inauguration as Confederate President, 83-86
creation of an administration, 86-92
his feeble foreign policy, 92-95
his short-sighted economy, 94-97
maneuvered into starting war, 97-100
his defensive attitude, 101-2, 107-8
protests transfer of capital to Richmond, 104
his reception by Richmond, 104-6
lack of originality in organization, loses early advantage, 106-15
his obscure policy, with military defects in west brings politicians' attack, 119-24
at installation of permanent government, 124-26
his character, 127-29
recovery from disastrous policy, 131-37
his blindness to military genius not from West Point, 137, 146-47
his defensive policy deeply based, 151, 186
his policy of scattered garrisons explained, 151-53
his undiplomatic reply to English Prime Minister, 174-75
his share of responsibility for 1863 disasters, 180, 192
never leader of Southern people as a whole, 180-81
his attitudes toward Lee and Johnston compared, 198-200
loses the confidence of the South, 203-6, 208-10, 262
Davis, Jefferson—*Continued*
restores quiet at Richmond bread riot, 220
his struggle against disaffection and chaos, 233-35
his "offensive defensive" a losing gamble, 239-43
sustained by his religious feeling in death of his little boy and in public misfortunes, 243-44
his unofficial reception of emissaries from Lincoln, 248
the drama of his soul externalized in the war, 251
his unshakable belief in Bragg his sole major blunder as President, but one of the highest magnitude, 254-57
his obstinate support of Hood leads to worse defeat, 266-69
appoints peace commission to meet Lincoln and Seward, 281
makes his greatest speech, 281
removes government to Danville, 283, 284
his last Cabinet meeting, 289-91
shows dislike of Johnston to end, 294
not captured in women's clothes, 298
Davis, Mrs. Jefferson (1st), death of, 68
Davis, Mrs. Jefferson (2nd), hears husband's farewell to U. S. Senate, 7, 15; skillful at political management, 90; on Davis's bent toward reconciliation, 95; Richmond gossip attacks, 106; finds Davis at prayer, 125; courageously fulfills social duties, 225-27
Davis, Joseph Emory, eldest brother of Jefferson, 49, 52; a constant help to Jefferson after his father's death, 62, 63, 67-68; as close companion and adviser of Jefferson, 69-72
Davis, Samuel, father of Jefferson, 35, 50; his life and ancestry, 51-59; death of, 61
Democrats, rise of, in South, 70
Desertions, Confederate, 213-14, 236, 274
Douglas, Stephen A., a demagogue and betrayer of the South, 8-9; compared with Davis, 15

Education, in Lower South, 37-38, 58, 59, 73; in Kentucky, 59-60
Europe, Davis's policy toward, 92-97, 102; Davis puts aside hope of intervention by, 132

Farmers, small, in Lower South, 35, 53
Foote, H. S., attacks Davis through Benjamin, 123
Forrest, Nathan Bedford, greatest cavalry leader of modern times, overlooked by Davis, 146; his plan to thwart Sherman rejected by Davis, 253-57
Fort Sumter, made by Lincoln a test case, 98-101

Gettysburg campaign, 192-95; results of, 195-96
Gladstone, W. E., rebuked as Chancellor for saying Davis and others "have made a nation," 167
Grant, U. S., captures Kentucky and Tennessee from A. S. Johnston, 121-22; near defeat at Shiloh, 129-30; Vicksburg the high point of his career, 197; his conduct of 1864 campaign, as lieutenant-general, brings slaughter of his men, low morale in North, 244-50

Howell, Varina, visit to Joseph Davis, 49-50, 72-76; penetrating analysis of Jefferson Davis, 74; wooed and won by Jefferson, 75-76
Hunter, Robert M. T., becomes staunch friend of Davis, 103; as Secretary of State, 112

Jackson, "Stonewall," rencounter of, with Davis at Manassas, 113-14; his military genius neglected by Davis, 137, 146-47, 191; his death at Chancellorsville staggers Davis, 190-91
Johnston, A. S., appointed general, 108, 112; loses Kentucky and Tennessee to Grant, 121-22; public outcry against, defied by Davis, 122-23; killed at Shiloh, 129
Johnston, Joseph E., paralyzing effect on Confederacy of his quarrel with Davis, 108; replaced in command of Army of Northern Virginia with Lee, 138; considered for Secretary of War, 148; largely responsible for 1863 disasters in his Department of the West, 178-89, 197; his retreat before Sherman made inevitable by Bragg, 252-59; superseded by Hood, 260; restored, too late, 273-74, 279

Kentucky, "to lose Kentucky is very nearly to lose all" (Lincoln), 103

Lee, Robert E., appointed general, 108; vetoes Beauregard's plan of attack, 110-11; his genius recognized by Davis, 137; raises the siege of Richmond, 138-42; his rencounter with Davis at Ellerson's Mill, 141; in Gettysburg campaign, 192-96; offers resignation to Davis, 199-200; lives on starvation fare, along with his army, 223-25; movement to make him dictator, 264, 271
Lincoln, Abraham, election of, ensured by Davis, 9; most defeated great man in U. S. history, 13-14; puts responsibility for starting war on South, 98-101; his military policy in 1862 sound, 114; steadier under criticism than Davis, 149; his greater skill in practical politics balanced against Davis's more realistic conception of the state, 207-8; repudiates peace program of disunion, 250; and Blair's peace mission, 280
Literature, as a career lacking in prestige in South, 69
Lower South, expansion and development of, 29-48, 2-53, 54, 55, 72; political parties in, 70, 72, 76; growth of revolutionary sentiment in, 264

McClellan, General, checked by Joseph Johnston at Seven Pines, 138; thrown back by Lee from Richmond, 138-42; his strategic victory at Sharpsburg ends Lee's threat to Washington and permits Lincoln's first Emancipation Proclamation, 142-45

Mallory, Stephen R., the one unequivocably good Cabinet appointment by Davis, 90
Manassas (battle), 110-12
Mason, James M., Confederate commissioner to England, his reception, 160
Mason and Slidell affair, 154-60
Memminger, C. G., named Secretary of Treasury, 88
Mexican War, Davis's record in, 77-79
Mississippi, secedes, 3, 9, 10; Davis named Major-General of its army, 6
Mississippi River, steamboats on, 73; loss by Confederacy, 130-31
Montgomery, Alabama, in 1861, 16-17; reception of, to President Davis, 27-28; transfer of Confederate capital from, a great mistake, 103-4

Negroes, use of, as soldiers disapproved by Davis till too late, 241, 274-78
North, early belief in slavery changes to will to dominate South, 12-14, 20

Plantation life, in Lower South, 33-35, 38, 47, 49-53
Politics, the only career for a planter, 69
"Poor whites," 53
Popular sovereignty, Southern attitude toward, 8-9
Prentiss, S. S., only equal of W. S. Yancey in mastery of oratory, 25; like many other public men an immigrant to Lower South, 56; defeats Davis for state legislature, 77; eulogizes Davis for Mexican War record, 78
Presidency (Confederate), election to, 22-28
Profiteering, in Confederacy, 96, 211-13, 219-20; opposition to measures against, 265

Raids, Federal, strengthen Davis in policy of scattered armies, 186; by Sheridan and Sherman, leave Southern women invincible, 218-19; at Huntsville, Alabama, 235
Rawle, Judge, his text on the Constitution studied by Davis, 64
Reagan, J. H., good as Postmaster General, 90; appeals to Davis for defense of Vicksburg, 192
Republicans, find Buchanan a near traitor, 3; determined to dominate South, 13
Rhett, Edmund, voices sentiment of anti-Davis party, 124
Rhett, R. B., the John the Baptist of secession movement, 8, 14; the Southern Tiresias, 10; powerless at Confederate Constitutional Convention, 22; his claim to Confederate Presidency the greatest, 24-25, 27; at Davis's inauguration, 84-85
Rhett, R. B., Jr., letter from Davis on secession, 5
Richmond, its reception to President Davis, 104-6; life in, during Civil War, 219-23, 225-30; at Confederate evacuation, 284-86

School of St. Thomas Aquinas, Davis at, 59
Secession, Davis on, 4-15; Northern belief in, changes to will to dominate, 12-13; fate of, at Confederate Constitutional Convention in hands of those who did not want it, 22
"Secession Plot" purely imaginary, 4, 8, 10
Seddon, James A., a good civilian Secretary of War, 148-50; his influence toward unified command in the West, 177-79, 183-86; loses Davis's confidence, 253
Senate (U. S.), Davis's farewell to, 6-8, 10-15
Seward, W. H., on "Secession Plot," 8; promises Confederate peace commission to evacuate Fort Sumter
Sharpsburg, greatest feat of Southern arms, 144-45
Sherman, W. T., his destructive march through Georgia leaves women invincible, 218-19; his military genius as great as his personal integrity was small, 252; his relentless march not what brought South to ruin, 271
Shiloh, Confederate defeat at, 129-30

Slave-trade, 38-40, 42
Slavery, defenses of and attacks on, 44-47
Slaves, plantation life of, 40-43; Davis brothers' treatment of, 71-72; devotion of, in Civil War, 214-15
Slidell, John, his mission to France, 168-76
Society, in Lower South, 55; in Richmond, 105-6
South, Upper vs. Lower, 25, 27, 30, 32, 104, 105
South Carolina, secession of, 3; defended by Davis, 4, 5; its part in secession convention, 25, 26; anti-Davis, 204
"Squatters," in Lower South, 36
"Starvation Club," 222-23, 227
Stephens, A. H., his influence in Confederate Constitutional Convention, 19-22; elected Vice-President of Confederacy, 23; with Davis not representative in best sense, 27; calls Negroes "the cornerstone of our new edifice," 40; at Davis's inauguration, 84; his embarrassing speech at Atlanta, 119; doctrinaire fanaticism leads him to verge of treason, 263; expresses his incredible opinion of Davis, 265; favors an armistice, 280, 281

Taylor, Sarah Knox, wooed and wedded by Davis, 66-67
Taylor, Colonel Zachary, appoints Second Lieut. Davis to escort Black Hawk, 65; objects to a poor second lieutenant (Davis) as his daughter's wooer, 66, 67; Davis's general in Mexican War, 78
To Our Constituents, Davis among signers of, 4
Toombs, Robert, regarded as too dangerous to be made Confederate President, 25-27; disappointed in being named Secretary of State, 88; resigns in disgust, 112
Transylvania University, Davis at, 59-61
Trumbull, Senator, denounces Buchanan and charges Davis with treason, 4

Vicksburg, Johnston and Davis both to blame for, 197
Virginia, dictation by, to secession convention, 25; migration from, to Lower South, 32, 33, 43; hesitation of, loses crucial border states to South, 103; prestige of, brings Confederate capital to Richmond, 104-5
Volunteers, Lincoln's and Davis's call for, 101-2, 112, 120

Walker, L. P., resigns as Davis's Secretary of War for lack of occupation, 89
Washington, Early's raid the direst threat to, 250
West Point, Davis at, 61, 62-65; President Davis's preference for officers from, 137
Wigfall, Senator L. T., added to ranks of Davis's enemies, 150; listens to Johnston's complaints, 184
Wilson, Woodrow, Davis's resemblance to, 15, 107

Yancey, W. L., not sent to secession convention, 9-10; his claim to Confederate Presidency passed by, 25, 27; at first reception to President Davis, 28; declines Davis's offer of Attorney Generalship, 89; heads fruitless commission to Europe, 92-94

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